

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

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#### CHAPTER XI.

It was an unwritten canon among the subordinate members of Dr. Vallotson's household that the mistress of the house always looked very well "when she was dressed." The substantially handsome garments which she was wont to don when she visited were, in particular, considered by her kitchen critics to "set her off" with conspicuous effect; and the parlour-maid, who had, of course, considerable opportunities of forming an opinion, and who was moreover a native of Alnchester, was in the habit of clinching her approving comments with the assertion that there was no lady in the town, or in the precincts either, who "dressed handsomer."

Both the parlour-maid in question and the coachman felt themselves established afresh in both these opinions as Mrs. Vallotson, who had come downstairs punctually at half-past three, went out to the brougham that afternoon. The woman saw at one glance that her mistress had "all her best things on." The man privately reiterated his conviction that she was "a wonderful fine figure of a woman, with a precious sight more stuff in her than any of the young ones!" So impressed was he by the characteristic in his mistress which he thus vaguely defined, that he could not refrain from an appreciative look at her as she stood some half an hour later before the door of Hatherleigh Grange.

As a matter of course, the Alnchester shops, exclusively, were patronised by the

doctor's wife, and her patronage was considered a very desirable honour. It was well understood that nothing but the very best would do for Mrs. Vallotson; the term comprehending all that was most thoroughly genuine in material, all that was most substantial and imposing in cut and decoration, and ignoring utterly such trifles as taste and new fashion. Her tall figure, clad, now, on these lines, in what their vendor had characterised as "excessively handsome" winter garments, no longer showed gaunt. It was drawn up to its full height, and there was a suggestion of force about its vigorous outlines which seemed to invest her with a singular dignity, not of repose or breeding, but of innate, self-conscious power. Her lips were slightly compressed, and her eyes glittered.

"Is Lady Karslake at home?"

"Yes, madam."

It struck the man that the question had been asked with a peremptoriness which hardly beseeemed a visitor who obviously possessed no footman, but he led the way across the hall with the impassiveness of a machine.

"What name, madam?"

The answer rang as peremptorily as her question had done:

"Mrs. Vallotson."

The next moment a door was flung open, and the name was repeated with that absolute inexpressiveness of which perhaps only a footman is capable.

It was a large room, warmed by two bright fires at opposite ends, and lighted by three long windows which faced the door and looked out over gardens and a park. It was one of those rooms which are so large that the furniture is necessarily so disposed that each separate arrangement of chairs, sofas, and tables is complete in itself; and

which only the most perfect taste can preserve from either over-crowding and over-decoration, or an alternative bareness. In this instance an absolutely harmonious result had been obtained. No aggressively distinct impression, either as to colour or style, was conveyed. There were quantities of flowers and ferns about, but even these were not obtrusive, and were rather noticeable in the general effect produced than in detail. The room had only one occupant. About the fireplace at the end of the room farthest from the door, there was a peculiarly comfortable and dainty little arrangement of furniture, backed by a beautiful screen. In a large, low chair thus protected, leaning idly back with a book on her knee, was Lady Karslake.

She turned her head quickly as the footman spoke, and rose with a graceful impulsive movement, moving a few steps forward—a slender, delicately-dressed figure—to receive her visitor. There was a little smile of half-amused curiosity coming and going in her eyes, and it changed into an almost mischievous flash of perception and anticipation as she held out her hand.

"I am delighted to make your acquaintance!" she said; she spoke with a cordiality of manner which sat delightfully upon her. "It is very kind of you to come and see me, Mrs. Vallotson!"

For an instant there was a very singular and perfectly perceptible pause. Mrs. Vallotson had taken the hand held out to hers, and she was still holding it—mechanically, as it seemed—as she looked straight into her hostess's face. There was so strange an expression in her eyes—could Lady Karslake have seen it in the gathering dusk—so full, piercing, and assured was their gaze; that for that instant, even confronted with the easy dignity of the woman whose hand she held, the rough power with which the doctor's wife was instinct asserted itself as absolute haughtiness, and she and her hostess stood on an equality.

The next moment Mrs. Vallotson had dropped Lady Karslake's hand, and dropped it brusquely.

"I am very happy to call," she said.

"You must have found it cold driving?" said Lady Karslake. "Will you take this chair—near the fire? How bright it has been, though!"

"It is hardly colder than we must expect at this time of year," responded Mrs. Vallotson tersely.

She had taken the chair indicated by her hostess, and was sitting erect and un-

compromising. Her dignity was about her still, but compared with the manner and bearing of her hostess it showed now chill and stiff.

Lady Karslake smiled and accepted the response with a careless, courteous gesture. The servants were bringing in lamps, and she was sitting in a flood of soft pinkish light as she scanned her visitor's face with a half delighted shrewdness in her own. She did not pursue the subject of the weather.

"It is a very pretty drive from Alchester in the summer, they tell me," she observed. "You know it well, of course? You must be very fond of Alchester, Mrs. Vallotson, I am sure."

"I do not know that I have ever thought about it. It is a pleasant place to live in, and I am accustomed to it. That is the principal thing, in my opinion."

The friendly cordiality of Lady Karslake's tone had produced not the faintest perceptible effect on Mrs. Vallotson's demeanour, and the tiniest flash of expression contracted her hostess's eyebrows. The footman had placed a little tea-table by her side, and she turned and began to pour out tea with quick, deft movements.

"You have lived here a great many years, I think?" she said. "Dr. Branston—you will let me give you some tea?"

She had half risen with a cup in her hand, and Mrs. Vallotson stopped her abruptly.

"None, thank you!" she said decidedly.

Lady Karslake sat down again with a little laugh; there was rather a wilful ring in it.

"None!" she said. "How sad! Afternoon tea seems to me the one thing that makes life in the country endurable. It breaks up the afternoon. I tell my husband that he only lives for tea-time. He always comes in for a cup."

"Indeed!"

The word was polite, but it was icy; and Lady Karslake, glancing across at her visitor's immovable face, leaned back in her chair.

"I was just going to say something about Dr. Branston!" she said. "I can't remember what it was, but I should very much like to tell you, if I may, how much my husband has appreciated his skill and care during his illness. We can never forget how much we owe to him."

The words were very perfectly spoken, with a gracious wifely dignity which made them indescribably charming. But not a

muscle of Mrs. Vallotson's face moved. Her colour seemed to have faded slightly as she answered, in the same inexpressive voice :

"I believe he is considered clever. I am glad you have been satisfied."

With a graceful movement as of impatience or annoyance, Lady Karslake lifted herself from her easy attitude. Then, as though to cover the movement, she rose and said with a little laugh :

"They can't have told my husband. I will ring. It will give him great pleasure——"

She was interrupted. With a sharp movement, evidently as involuntary as the gesture with which she stretched out one hand as if to command silence, Mrs. Vallotson had turned her head.

"That's North's voice," she said.

There was a sound of voices outside as she stopped with a strange, breathless catch in her voice—and she half rose from her seat.

Lady Karslake glanced down at her with a flash of surprise.

"How quick of you!" she said. "Yes, it does sound like Dr. Branston, doesn't it? I suppose he has been to see my husband, and is coming in to have some tea."

The voices came nearer as she spoke, a touch fell on the handle of the door, and Mrs. Vallotson sat slowly down again on her chair; slowly and stiffly like a woman made of stone.

"Have you come for a cup of tea, Dr. Branston?" said Lady Karslake as the door opened. She held out her hand to North Branston as he came across the room to her, with an easy cordiality of greeting which witnessed, as did the tone of her voice, to the intercourse of the past weeks. "I have a visitor, you see. William," she added, "I want to introduce you to Mrs. Vallotson."

Sir William Karslake had followed North Branston into the room. Even when weighted by the heavy disabilities of weakness and pain, his conspicuous personal advantages and his dignity of manner had been by no means overlaid; seen now in comparative health, he was a singularly striking-looking man. He was a tall man, as has been said, but it was not from his height that his presence derived its dignity. There was about him that air of perfect breeding which is in part an affair of birth, in part of the circumstances of life; and it was coupled with that which gives it a supreme charm—a suggestion of

mental power, and of the habit of command. Sir William Karslake had made a great success of life. He stood at the head of his own line in the diplomatic service, and he had been for many years one of the most courted men in the Indian Empire. Socially, also, the ball of life had been at his feet. And there were characteristics about his face which suggested that in the latter case, as in the former, his dominance had been the result of deliberate calculation. His features were admirable, and life had impressed upon them that charm of stateliness which makes a man handsomer in middle age than youth can ever be; but there were lines about it faintly suggestive of sarcastic possibilities, and his eyes were cold and expressionless. Neither in his step nor in his carriage were there any traces of the invalid, but his illness had left its mark on him nevertheless. His features were almost painfully sharply chiselled, and there were deep hollows about his eyes.

He quickened his steps slightly, on Lady Karslake's words, with a courteous gesture of satisfaction, and came up to where Mrs. Vallotson sat.

"May I have the pleasure of introducing my husband, Mrs. Vallotson?"

There was the faintest touch of surprise in Lady Karslake's voice. Mrs. Vallotson had neither moved nor spoken as Sir William Karslake approached her. As Lady Karslake, however, spoke she rose slowly. Her figure was drawn up to its full height; her head was lifted and slightly thrown back; and her eyes were almost on a level with those of the man before her as she looked full into his face and held out her hand.

"I am very happy!" she said.

Sir William Karslake had taken her hand, and bowed over it in the courtly manner which was habitual with him. Then he looked in due course into her face. There was no pause, even of the most imperceptible nature, before he spoke; not a muscle of his face seemed to have moved; and yet in that brief second his eyes had altered slightly. An intent expression had developed in them, as of a clear-headed man who finds himself suddenly disturbed by a shadowy association of ideas too dim and too fleeting to be either accurately defined or traced to any source.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity!" he said. "Branston"—this over his shoulder to North in the same suave, well-modulated tone—"why did you not tell us

that we were to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Vallotson?"

"I am not a seer, unfortunately," returned North. The surprise with which he had acknowledged Mrs. Vallotson's presence had vanished, and he smiled grimly as he spoke. "I could not tell you what I did not know myself."

"You'll have some tea, Dr. Branston?"

North turned to Lady Karslake, who had seated herself again by the tea-table, and took a low chair near her.

"Thanks," he said. "I will."

At the same moment Sir William Karslake seated himself by Mrs. Vallotson.

"I am a great admirer of your fine old city, Mrs. Vallotson!" he said courteously; the words, indeed, were more courteous than truthful, and represented the speaker's sense of a conversational necessity rather than any actual fact. "No doubt it presents to me, as a new-comer, picturesque points which are over-familiar to its inhabitants. But probably the balance is struck for the Alnchester people by what I may perhaps call the pride of ownership."

He smiled suavely as he finished, but the smile did not touch his eyes. They were scanning Mrs. Vallotson's profile half-furtively, as though almost without their owner's consciousness.

Mrs. Vallotson paused a moment, almost as though she felt his scrutiny and permitted it. Her own face was set like a rock, and her very lips were colourless.

"We do not admire the old part of the city," she said. "But all the newer parts have been greatly improved during the past twenty years."

"Quite so!" was the courteous reply.

An absent, preoccupied tone had come into Sir William Karslake's voice. Mrs. Vallotson had not turned her face away again, nor had her eyes left him; and the furtive glance with which he had regarded her was becoming almost a stare.

Neither of the two turned, or even seemed to be aware of any movement about them, when Lady Karslake and North Branston, who had been talking easily together on the other side of the great fireplace, rose, and strolled to the other end of the room to look at a picture of which they had been speaking.

"Quite so!" repeated Sir William Karslake vaguely. "You—have lived in Alnchester all your life, I believe?"

His voice was suave still, but it was the suavity of habit, mechanical, constrained,

and rather ghastly. He was still staring straight into her face, and there was a moment's dead silence.

Then Mrs. Vallotson's white lips moved. She moistened them involuntarily as it seemed, and with her eyes still holding his she said in a low voice, the absolute calmness of which was almost horribly unnatural:

"You think you know me! You are mistaken."

The speech was no answer to the words he had spoken. His question died between them, utterly ignored by both man and woman in the presence of something unspoken which had risen between them.

Slowly, as she spoke, all that was indefinite and suppressed in Sir William Karslake's expression developed; every line of his face seemed to become petrified; recognition, blank uncompromising recognition was stamped lividly on every feature, and stared from his eyes. He did not speak; the muscles about his mouth stood out strong and distinct. They sat there by the fire staring each at the other, and from the other end of the room came the murmur of the voices of Lady Karslake and North Branston. They were differing over the picture.

Mrs. Vallotson paused as though to let her words sink into his consciousness. Then she repeated them. The two pairs of eyes held one another as if fascinated; held one another, it might have been, in the strength of the terrible, slowly-growing repulsion common to both.

"You are mistaken. You do not know me. You understand? I am not the person for whom you take me!"

She had spoken very slowly, uttering each word with deliberate emphasis, though her voice was low. And as slowly as she had spoken he answered her, endorsing her words as it were in a hard, strained tone:

"I am mistaken! You are not—the person for whom I take you."

They faced each other for a moment more, and then Sir William Karslake moved abruptly, and the rigidity of his face broke up. He motioned almost fiercely to where North stood at the other end of the room.

"Who—is that?" he said hoarsely.

To her face too there came a desperate flash of expression; a sudden defiance stirred her every feature.

"My brother," she said.

Their eyes met once more.

Sir William Karslake's hands were trembling convulsively; he clenched one of them violently round the arm of his chair.



He was looking at her again, and his eyes were fierce and searching.

"You had no brother!" he said. He spoke, for the first time, rapidly and unevenly. "You had no——"

Their eyes met once more.

A moment later Mrs. Vallotson had risen, and was moving down the room to Lady Karlake.

"I have paid you a long call," she said, in a voice from which every particle of expression was eliminated. "I must say good-bye."

"We shall meet again before long, I hope?" returned Lady Karlake lightly.

She shook hands as she spoke, and Mrs. Vallotson paused. Then, without looking at him, she addressed North Branston.

"You are coming, North?" she said.

He signed assent, shook hands with Lady Karlake, and followed her.

### HOLIDAY MOODS.

PEOPLE have very different notions about a holiday. I know a cut-and-dried man of business, aged sixty or so, who prides himself on never having been out of his birth-town for three successive days. He has not much patience with his clerks when these entreat for a little extra recreation. All the change he wants, he says, he gets by going from one department of his manufactory to another. He may thus be imagined spending a lively August in the export section of his works, where the air is certainly a little less confined than that of his private office, among Russia leather ledgers and musty invoice files.

It is difficult even yet to make our elders understand how the younger generation crave "fresh woods and pastures new" when the year is in the full glory of its verdure. They do not see that the conditions of existence nowadays are otherwise than they were forty or fifty years ago.

Here is the text of a brief interchange of words on this subject between an old lady of eighty and her grand-daughter, who, somewhat shyly, had mentioned to her aged relative her plan of a cycle tour with another girl.

"Do you mean, my dear," enquires grandmamma, with wide-open old eyes, "that you cannot get on without this fortnight of hoydenish existence in the open air?"

Grand-daughter laughs gently as she replies:

"Of course, dear grandmother, I dare say I should not die all at once if I gave it up. But I pant for it—I really do."

"You pant for it! How extraordinary! When your grandfather was alive, he found one week's visit to London enough excitement for him in seventeen years."

"But you don't see, dear grandmother, how different things are now. I——"

"Perhaps I don't, my dear," interposes the old lady, with a delightful assumption of severity. "I look forward to heaven and eternity for my holiday."

Shrewd grand-daughter smiles, and her eyes gleam with quiet satisfaction as she retorts:

"That will be a very long holiday indeed, dear grandmother."

Grandmamma hereupon frowns prettily, rustles her gown, and asks her young relative to be kind enough to ring for tea.

There is no doubt about it; this fashion of frequent and emphatic holidays has become almost a passion with many of us. We have, thanks to inventions of one kind and another, got the measure of our little globe so exactly, and know the possibilities it affords us on its several lines of latitude so well, so that we can, if we will, obtain pleasurable change every week of the fifty-two. Broadly, we have the south of France for the winter; London for the spring at its best; the country for the melting days of an old-fashioned summer—if we are blessed with it; the moors and the purple Western Isles, with their midges and hotel bills, for the autumn; and a snug Christmas at home somewhere brings the year to an agreeable close.

Of course, this is a programme only for the most fortunate of us. But it is one that is followed with fair impartiality by many. The minority may, if they will, sigh and wish it was theirs also; or they may do better by striving with all their might to bring themselves to that degree of worldly prosperity which shall place it in their power.

In contrast with such enviable scope for change we may put the single day in the country with which our excellent clergy and others indulge so many of the youngsters of our towns. That, if you like, is a fervid experience.

The other morning I joined a canal boat-load of ragged children bound for their annual outing. They were of ages from five to fifteen, and their rags were as picturesque as the blend of beeches, larch, and oaks by the waterside. Their clamour

as they climbed into the boat was good to hear, each with his or her tin mug clattering an accompaniment. Their interest in the trivial rural sights they saw was as pathetic as diverting. The more lusty of the boys could hardly be kept from hurling themselves into the water, and the more vigorous of the girls sang hymns one after the other, with bright eyes, and hands folded in their laps or twined about each other's necks.

This was the first course of their banquet of delight. When they were let loose in the spacious meadows ten miles from a town, they could not for a few minutes realise that they were free to run where they pleased without the repressive interference of some one with a "Hi, there, you little beggar, clear off that grass, or I'll give you something to make you!" They learnt the lesson soon enough, though. Then, before their eager little hands, daisies and buttercups, meadow-sweet and fox-gloves fell fast. They even plucked bunches of common grass, and viewed their treasure fondly.

A field-mouse had the ill luck to show himself near one of the boys. A chase ensued. The mouse was caught, hugged with pride, and in a trice crushed to death.

"What is it, master?" asked the elated child, as he exposed the flattened carcase, surrounded by a group of youngsters as eager as himself.

And so on through the glorious avenue of swings, races for sweets and cakes, an unlimited tea at tables spread in the middle of the meadow—with strawberries picked that very afternoon—more running and jumping, and the final journey home in the old canal boat.

"What is the matter?" I asked a pretty little maid of eight or nine who was sitting with clasped hands in one corner of the boat, nursing a little packet of fruit and sweets wrapped in her handkerchief. There were tears on her cheeks. The twilight glow shone on them, and the young moon among the crimsoned wisps of clouds seemed trying to do the same.

"Oh, please," the little maid whispered, "I'm so happy I don't know what to do."

The words came with a fresh gush of tears. Upon my soul, I could, if I would, have cried with her.

We adults scarcely know or rather remember—for we ought to know—the ease with which these less fortunate little ones of the great family of human beings may be lifted, for a time at all events, from earth to heaven. For the price of a

mutton chop you may give a slum child seven or eight hours of such happiness as you are lucky if you yourself may ever again hope to experience.

Some people are so omnivorous in their energy that they cannot take a holiday without also giving themselves a holiday task. I sympathise with them. There was a time when I also felt that way. I either took with me the grammar of a language new to me, or a stiff book, or an educative plan to which I proposed to devote all my wandering thoughts.

But nowadays I do no such thing. If I can get on to the top of a high mountain on a cloudless day, and there lie with my pipe and no thoughts in particular, shielded from flies by my smoke and a handkerchief, but with heaven's blue sky unobscured to stare at—this, I am almost ashamed to say, suffices me. The perfume of the heather and the murmur of the breeze gives me all the society I want. And so I let the hours drift by as they will.

Or I get into a boat on an inland lake, dear Windermere from preference, and hold the white sail while a procession of green woods, motley hills, and purple mountains pass before me, with the whispering of the water at the bows for company. At such times I am lamentably vacuous and unresponsive. The passing bee or butterfly, or the white gull that skims the lake, is more to me than that other boat towards which, perchance, I drive imperceptibly while holding the tiller. And even the bee, or the moth, or the bird, is little enough to me then.

Yet this is my ideal of a holiday—for the time.

On the other hand, as I have said, there are people who do but change their skies and worry out a new assortment of cares. Either the fresh surroundings are to beget a new novel, or are to be considered microscopically as material for a magazine article, or as possible human material for social schemes and ambitions—such as the wedding of a daughter—or what not.

I know a worthy lady who annually migrates from town to some lovely part of the country, and during her six weeks' change of air reckons to write six hundred pages of manuscript, two hundred and fifty words to the page. She is jaded when she leaves the metropolis, and when she returns she has deepened the wrinkles which are already, I am sorry to say, too deeply graven on her earnest brow.

And she calls this a holiday! It is

about as much a holiday as the convict's change of air, when he is moved with a chained gang of his fellows from Portland to Dartmoor.

The thing to do, I am convinced, is to keep one's workaday skin tolerably loose on one's body at all times, so that at a few hours' notice one may step forth bodily from it, and leave it to its own affairs safely locked up in the study or the counting-house. The result is benefit all round.

It is most instructive to mark how our artisans take their pleasure on one of the few general holidays of the year. There are excursion trains for those who can afford those somewhat ambitious enterprises. But the excursion trains are not in it as an attraction with the long, four-horsed brakes in which they can journey in companies of thirty or forty to some sylvan retreat a score or so miles from their native place.

They; their large-bodied, beshawled wives; and their voluble children, all crowd into the vehicles, and as soon as these have started, troll forth hymns for the entertainment of the circumambient air as well as themselves. You would almost suppose the horses entered into the spirit of the occasion—at the outset. But the poor quadrupeds soon realise that they are in for a vexatious spell of work, and bow their heads humbly to the responsibility set upon them.

A picnic of this kind is always contrived to be in the vicinity of a public-house of accredited fame for its beer. Thus, while the youngsters are tumbling about on the hillsides or "berrying" in the woods, the oldsters—not unaccompanied by their wives—call for one quart after another. They smoke and drink, and search their minds for memories of the days when they were like their children, or when, maybe, they did their courting on this self-same spot. It is not a highly sensational form of holiday, but it has its charms. And in the evening the horses are reluctantly again backed into the shafts, and in the waning light the earlier canticles—and others—are renewed.

Perhaps the worst feature of these merry-makings is the unconscionably long and frequent halts made at each tavern on the way home. It were a sin against custom in my part of the country not to become "mellow," at least, long ere the steaming and footsore horses are pulled up for the night. The singing and shouting of the lads and lasses, and their decidedly open

manifestation of an endearing interest in each other, combine with the invertebrate condition of their elders to make up a picture that is not altogether humorous, but is very characteristic.

But the ways of the tripper are at any rate as droll as those of the ironworker and the collier in the holiday brake "Princess," "Victoria," or "The Duke of York." Never was he more to the front than now, and never perhaps was he better worth studying.

I have quite lately seen him in full force, day after day, on Windermere's placid waters. He leaves home at midnight or thereabouts of the morning (pardon the bull!) when his pleasure is, he hopes, destined to begin. He is not so prone to solace himself with beer as with spirituous liquors. Of these, however, he carries a supply that would last any ordinary toper on ordinary occasions a week. They comfort him through the chilly hours which precede the dawn; they enable him joyously to drink the sun's health if that desirable planet elects to rise visibly; he refers to them when he is near his destination, and throughout the day he makes constant calls upon them for amicable support.

It is a pity that liquor should play the enormous part it does in the holiday trips of the populace. I know not, however, how it can be helped. I have seen a score of these soddened pleasure-seekers get from the railway cars into the midst of scenery sweet enough to cheer even a broken heart, and appear all unmindful of it. There have been placards on the walls hard by telling them of the eternal damnation they are hastening to in thus debasing themselves. And there have been well-meaning gentlemen with blue ribbons in their buttonholes, who have had the courage to accost them and try to get an improving word edgewise into their clouded wits. All to no purpose, however.

A sorry sight this of Lakeland disgraced by a horde of blaspheming, reeling excursionists, some of whom can with difficulty keep themselves on their legs while they make their way down to Windermere's shore.

They may be seen an hour or two afterwards zigzagging about Grasmere and Rydal until the dinner-hour. The less said the better about their return to Windermere's railway station, where they often have to be lifted into the train like so many pigs.

I don't like painting such a picture, but it had better be done. All Lakeland's cheap

day trippers are not of this kidney; nor anything like the majority of them. But there are quite enough of these tipsy souls among them to make even the local press—though interested in the money thus brought into the district—utter its reproofs and paragraphs of warning. Let the criminals look to it, or they will bring Wordsworth's country into a disrepute akin to that which a generation or two ago fell upon certain metropolitan pleasure resorts.

I like better to tell of the way in which a schoolboy nephew spent his holiday at my cottage in Lakeland. Not a day passed on which he did not bathe twice in the lake, reckless of the litigation in progress about the water's pollution from sewage. When he was not bathing, eating—with holiday appetite—or sleeping, he was either rowing from bay to bay, fishing for perch, chasing butterflies, climbing mountains, or dissecting with youthful enthusiasm the various dead bodies he brought home for the purpose.

He had a room given up to him for his naturalistic pursuits. It was not always a pretty spectacle, I assure you, this room. There were bloated toads in it, some dead, some living, slugs and snails, rats and mice, and the carcasses of birds. Have you ever taken an interest in the internal economy of a black roadside slug? I had not hitherto. But this young votary of science taught me much while he was experimentally improving himself. He made me see, too, how lamentably I had wasted a generation or so of time, in that I too had not earlier pined to know how a toad lives, and breathes, and has its being.

It seems to me that one must be either very young or very old rightly to appreciate and use a holiday. In the middle period of life it is so difficult not to think of the wrong things at the wrong time, instead of thinking of the right things only or nothing at all.

By the way, the above-mentioned nephew let loose a box of five-and-twenty spiders—assorted—about the dinner-table one day. This proves that he too had his imperfections, as well as his amiable enthusiasms.

### WHALING IN THE ANTARCTIC.

HARDLY have the jagged peaks and grim grey cliffs of the Falklands lost themselves in the sea when the work of fitting-up on

board the "Albatross" commences in earnest. The crow's-nest is run up to the mast-head. The huge coils of rope are dragged from below, and spliced together on the half-deck: five coils for each boat's line, giving a total length of about four hundred yards.

The operation of coiling the lines in the bottom of each boat is now entered upon. This is a work of time and art, the least hitch in the running gear, when a whale is struck, meaning certain loss and a possible catastrophe.

This task being completed by a crew, it is notified by a triumphant hurrah, after which the minor details—as lances, water-cask, axe, bucket, gun, and harpoon—are added.

A great deal of blank-cartridge firing goes on during the cleaning of the whale guns, which gives a lively effect, and, together with the boyish eagerness and hilarity of the crews, tends more than any words to convey the fact that the sport we have come so far to seek is now near at hand.

Gradually the air grows colder, and now, on the twenty-sixth of November, we greet with a sounding cheer the first iceberg of the Antarctic. A fair breeze is blowing, and the great flat-topped mass comes pitching and rolling upon our port bow. It bears slight resemblance to the bergs from Baffin's Bay, which are pinnacled as they pass upward. Hardly has the first passed our view when a large body of them is sighted, and for many hours we steer in perilous proximity to the floating giants.

A sharp look-out is now kept, as at any moment we may enter the pack ice, or come into collision with a wandering berg. All is excitement on board. Eager knots of seamen, on watch and off, stand on the forepeak, or lie over the bow, discussing the probabilities and improbabilities. Men sleep lightly, and, at the least shout or rush of feet across the deck, spring from their berths with the eagerness of school-boys.

The weather grows foul, squally, and misty. This gives an excuse for criticism on the part of Wallace the harpooneer, who is Lord High Critic for the ship's company, and he talks more loudly of the blue sky and the bright sun that shines eternally in the frozen North.

I must say that we hear him with regret, but we do not murmur, and our patience is rewarded.

The foul weather is a memory, and the



breeze now sweeps in soft airs loaded with the ozone from a thousand ice-clad islands, and untold miles of floating snow. On the port side, like a bat's wing, rises the grim outline of a sterile land, steadily lessening as we steam on. Around us is pack ice. The sun with a radiant glory beats upon our heads. The sea dances with a thousand lights, breaking in soft murmurs on the glittering ice-blocks. Around us the countless myriads of birds circle and soar; plume themselves on the snow-crowned terraces; and scream, and chatter, and fight, in the long ripples of our wake.

I am up in the crow. Resting my arms on the rail, I let my eyes wander over the spreading leagues of sea and ice, and drink in the glories of this dazzling land—glories that will never fade till the past is all forgotten.

A flock of lovely sheath-bills hovers over me in idle curiosity, but, on extending my hand, they sweep down the wind like a shower of cherry blossom in the spring. Great carrion gulls follow the ship and croak hoarsely, hanging hawk-like over the mizen-top. Icebergs tower on all sides. The air is so keen, the reflection so brilliant, and the whole scene so startling, yet so peaceful, that I fall into a dreamy reverie.

The days slip by, and it is now the fourth of December. We are in latitude sixty-five, longitude ninety degrees, and steaming leisurely amid a field of mixed ice. The field is open to an unexpected extent. Small blocks predominate, but here and there the sides of a vast floe or flat-topped iceberg rise over all.

Now and again we meet with a stretch of tighter ice, but with some masterly dodging, and an occasional determined charge with our sturdy bows, we have small difficulty in effecting a passage.

On board an unwonted excitement prevails. The captain has discovered in his "food-bag," which drags astern, unmistakable signs that the tiny animalcula on which the black whale feeds is present in great quantity. "Spoutings" have also been seen, and the oily patches of water which the fish leaves in its passage have also been perceived by a few.

The indefatigable captain is aloft, devouring the distance with the long glass. The six boats on the davits are all ready for instant action. The guns swing on their swivels; and the broad, cruel barbed head of the harpoon looks grimly from the mouth of each.

The members of the watch on deck are

whistling, dancing, or leaning over the side in eager anticipation of a coming "fall." Suddenly the merriment ceases, for away on the horizon rises a deep line of cloud, gradually heightening and swiftly approaching.

All eyes turn towards the west, and more than one grumbling murmur escapes from the stern lips, for nothing is more fatal to whaling than the heavy mists met with at the Poles. It is the Arctic plague again. For days it will settle around the wretched whaler like a fallen cloud, and woe be to the unhappy boat that is caught in it, for the very sound of the siren sinks echoless in its dismal shroud.

Soon the evil curtain is upon us. The captain descends from his perch. The engines cease throbbing. The whole ship lies like a silent log on the impassive surface of the sea.

I smoke a pipe and play "checkers" in the engine-room. Gloomy mumblings, like the deep mutterings of a disturbed geyser, rise from the fo'c'sle; while round the galley fire sits a half-circle of seasoned salts, smoking savagely, or listening moodily to the singing of their tin tea-kettles.

During the second dog-watch the well-known blast of a whale rouses the watch with a start. But the evil mist prevents a sight of the fish.

Shortly it blows again, and so near is it that the fine spray actually showers on deck, and sweeps our faces as we lean over the side.

It passes close beneath us. The harpooners rush frantically to the boats to get a shot at it, but, phantom-like, it disappears in the mist.

Hardly have we recovered when a chorus of blasts echoes on all sides, and the stout ship trembles and quivers from stem to stern as a man taken with the palsy. Amazement writes itself on the ship's company. Never has the like of this happened to any before. Never may it happen again.

For a full hour the giant creatures make merry around us, scraping themselves on the rough bottom of their new friend, and half swamping us with the great waves they raise in their leviathan gambols.

But at last they leave us, and we retire below, away from the hateful fog, to nurse our own bitter feelings in the silence of despair.

Two days drag slowly past. Still the curtain is around us, and a settled frown marks the faces of all. Will it continue

for ever? Whales have been heard blowing, but no boat can leave the ship.

Suddenly—and may the delight live for ever!—a light breeze springs up, and, as if by magic, the hateful veil vanishes into the blue sky.

The captain is in the nest, and now his head shows over the rim, and he calls down to the mate on the bridge:

"Fish on the starboard quarter! All hands on deck, and see that the boats are ready! Up aloft, and shake out these sails!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" comes the response, and the watch springs to the ratlines.

The mate leaves the bridge, and up come the sailors from the half-deck and fore-castle like a swarm of rats, some in their shirts and some in their trousers, but seldom in both. Eagerly sixty pairs of eyes search the sea, and sixty tongues clatter to the same tune.

Their curiosity satisfied, they dive below to equip themselves for the coming hunt, and a confused noise rises to the deck like the buzz of wasps in an underground byke.

"There she blows!" yells the cook, who has perched himself on the cross-trees, as we notice a fine jet of spray rise on to the skyline. But the warning finger of the captain stops him further. Soon all are equipped and waiting for the order. It comes:

"First mate's boat lower away there! Mind and keep her tail on, and take your time, lads."

"Ay, ay, sir!" sings the mate, while the men give a faint cheer, fearful of disturbing their prizes.

In one minute the tackles are let go, the boat is in the water, and with great sweeps the rowers bend to their work.

The whales, three in number, lie like black islands of marble in contrast to the pearly-hued ice-blocks. Tiny waves break over their mountainous sides, falling backwards in silvery strands to their native depths. And at intervals there comes to us the deep "roust," as the glittering fountains play upward, and spread themselves over the shimmering surface of the sea.

As the boat nears the foremost one, not a sound breaks the silence, and every sight strains itself to the utmost.

Nearer and nearer it draws to the great mass lying unconscious of all danger.

The first mate unships his oar and stands by the gun. Still it approaches. Suddenly a white puff of smoke bursts from the bow, and next instant a sharp sound trips over the ocean.

"They're fast! They're fast!" rings through the ship, followed by a deafening cheer as the boat is seen tearing through the water.

Up goes the Jack, signalling that they are fast, and another cheer rolls over the ocean and resounds among the ice-floes.

Faster and faster flies the boat, the line rushing furiously over the bow, and a wall of foam standing before her. Far, far down is leviathan vainly endeavouring to escape from his cruel enemy in the dark, cold depths beneath.

An oar is raised as a signal for help, and immediately three more boats are manned and lowered. Off they go to the rescue, the crews with their teeth set, their nostrils dilated, and the stout larch oars bending like bows to their brawny backs.

They are in time. The first boat of the three hastily splices on to the remaining fathoms of rope in the first mate's boat, and so itself becomes the "fast" one.

So terrible is the pace, that the harpooneer stands, axe in hand, ready to cut shall a hitch occur in the running.

Soon a third boat is the fast one, and yet the whale has only risen once.

At last!

"There she rises, boys," comes the glad shout, as an immense jet of water spouts into the air, and the sea is lashed into a white foam by the monster's tail.

Off go the free boats to the attack with harpoons and lances ready. But the whale does not wait for them. Away it goes again, heading this time for a vast floe. The line furls over the bow, and a constant supply of water is required to prevent the wood taking fire.

On; on. The joyful eagerness on board is turning to fear. Will it reach the floe? Will they have to cut?

Soon the chase is beyond our unaided vision. The captain's eyes are buried in the glass. Hours seem to pass.

There is a shout from the deck. The boats are returning. "One, two, three we count. But where is the fourth? Smashed or dragged under the floe is the general opinion, pressed home by the cook, whose nature has been soured by a constant companionship with bad junk and sour pea-soup.

A deep silence falls upon the fore-castle, but when the boats come alongside we find that the cook is wrong, and immediately the spirits of all rise again, so sudden and variable are the moods of the whaler.

The lost boat, it appears, is still fast to

the fish, which is lying under the floe dead, but defying the united strength of the four boats to withdraw it.

Instantly the engines are set at work, and we proceed to the scene of action at full speed. When we arrive, we find the boat calmly lying by at the floe edge, and the crew snowballing each other like a crowd of schoolboys.

At the command of the captain the six boats unite themselves in a grand effort, but of no avail. Dynamite is then tried. But the dynamite is a failure.

Again our spirits fall. What is to be done? There is a long discussion between the captain and the mates, and a conclusion is at last come to. The final chance is to be tried, with a whale for the venture.

The fast rope is secured on deck, and the engineer slips below. The engines revolve slowly, but the pace increases steadily as the hempen line tautens to the strain.

There is no movement yet, and the rope is singing like a fiddle-string. Will the harpoon hold? Will the rope stand? Oh, the anxiety that besets us as we watch!

I hang over the side and watch the water. There is a movement, but I will not swear to it. There is a shout—"We move! we move!" Then a long succession of hurrahs, as we discover, for a certainty, that we are making way.

A little later the noise is truly deafening as the mighty monster rises from beneath the floe like a gigantic life-buoy. The sky is rent with cheers and counter-cheers, and the flocks of birds, daring as they are, give us a wide berth till the noise ceases.

Soon the whale is alongside. Nose and tail tackles are rigged up, and everything is in readiness for the flinchers, who, with sharp spikes on their feet, blubber knives, spades, and the like, betake themselves on to the glossy back of the great cetacean.

### WOMEN AS DRAMATISTS.

THOUGH we can count women novelists by the score, the number of women dramatists is extremely limited, and can easily be told off on the fingers. To see two plays written by women and produced at leading London theatres is a most unusual experience. This has been the case during the theatrical season of 1894.

"An Aristocratic Alliance," adapted by Lady Greville for the English stage, and produced at the Criterion, was speedily

followed by Miss Fletcher's play of "Mrs. Lessingham," at the Garrick.

Though neither made a conspicuous success, yet their production shows that modern women are not without the dramatic faculty, and are capable of writing for the stage. In the last century, all literary young ladies tried their 'prentice hands at a tragedy. One of these ambitious aspirants brought her production to Dr. Johnson, and begged him to look over it.

He gruffly told her that she could find out the mistakes as well as he could.

"But, sir," she said, "I have no time. I have so many irons in the fire."

"Then, madam," growled the Doctor, "the best thing I can advise you to do is to put your tragedy in along with your irons."

Before Johnson's day, however, one woman had made a very high reputation as a dramatist, though her line was comedy, not tragedy. Susanna Centlivre wrote no fewer than eighteen plays, three of which, "The Wonder," "The Busybody," and "A Bold Stroke for a Wife," kept the stage for a hundred years, and are even now remembered as remarkable performances for a woman of that day. Congreve gave up writing plays in a fit of pique, because his "Way of the World" was totally neglected, while Mrs. Centlivre's "Wonder" attracted crowded houses.

Her story is a romance in itself. Born about 1667 in Ireland, where her father, a Lincolnshire landowner, had taken refuge in order to escape from the persecution he endured as a Dissenter, Susanna was left an orphan at twelve years old. At fifteen she made her way to England, intending to go on foot to London and seek her fortune. On the way she was overcome by fatigue, and sat down by the roadside weeping bitterly. A young Cambridge student happened to be passing at the time, and was struck with pity at her forlorn condition. Along with pity was a stronger feeling; he persuaded her to accompany him to Cambridge, dressed in men's clothes. Here she remained for some time, and picked up a smattering of learning and a few scraps of Latin. Provided with a little money, she went on her way, and soon found an admirer in a nephew of Sir Stephen Fox, who married her, but died within the year, leaving her a widow at eighteen. Her next husband was a Mr. Carroll, who was killed in a duel, so she was a widow for the second time, and tried to support herself by turning actress. Notwithstanding her

youth, wit, and beauty, she failed to make her mark, and then she took to writing comedies. Her dialogue is easy and natural, and she has a remarkable fertility for inventing startling incidents. One of her characters, Marplot, in "The Busybody," has become a by-word for a foolish man, always spoiling the schemes of the lovers. When Sir George Airey hides in the chimney, Marplot pulls down the chimney-board and discovers him. In "A Bold Stroke for a Wife," the hero, Colonel Fainwell, passes himself off as Simon Pure the Quaker, which has given rise to the expression, the "real Simon Pure," constantly in use at the present day, though few are able to trace the origin of the expression.

Mrs. Centlivre's plays are coarse to a degree; she partook of the coarseness of the age of Charles the Second, and never tried to rise above it. Her third husband, Mr. Centlivre, was principal cook to Queen Anne. She did not long survive her third marriage, and died in 1723.

Nearly eighty years afterwards, Joanna Baillie made a sensation in the literary world by her "Plays on the Passions." She worked on a plan of her own; each of the great passions—anger, jealousy, love, envy, hatred, pride—was to be illustrated by a tragedy and a comedy. These plays stand out for their masculine strength and vigour, for the dignity of the blank verse, and for the wonderful insight into various phases of character. "Women," says Byron in his journal, "except Joanna Baillie, can't write tragedy. They have not seen enough of life." It was a remarkable exception, made in favour of the quiet daughter of a Scotch Presbyterian minister, whose life had been as tame and monotonous as a Quakers' meeting. Sir Walter Scott was enthusiastic about his friend Joanna Baillie, and even ranked her with Shakespeare.

"De Montford," the tragedy illustrating hatred, was produced at Drury Lane by John Kemble, in April, 1800, and ran for eleven nights, Mrs. Siddons taking the part of Jane De Montford, which had been expressly written for her. She liked the part so much that she said to Joanna Baillie in her grand, imperious way: "Make me more Jane De Montfords!"

"Constantine Paleologus," a tragedy taken from Gibbon's account of the siege of Constantinople by the Turks, was brought out at the Surrey Theatre as a melodrama, and was also performed at Liverpool, Dublin, and Edinburgh. At Edinburgh,

in 1820, Joanna Baillie herself witnessed the performance. One of her most successful pieces was what she called her Highland play, "The Family Legend," which was acted at Edinburgh, under the fostering care of Sir Walter Scott. He wrote to his friend Joanna: "You have only to imagine all that you could wish to give success to a play, and your conception will fall short of the complete and decided triumph of 'The Family Legend.' Everything that pretended to distinction, whether from rank or literature, was in the boxes, and in the pit such an aggregate mass of humanity, as I have seldom, if ever, witnessed in the same place." "The Family Legend" was played for fourteen nights, and after it, "De Montford" was revived at the Edinburgh Theatre with some success. Two of Joanna Baillie's plays were brought out in London simultaneously, "The Separation" at Covent Garden, and "Henriquez" at Drury Lane. Neither of them made much impression. Macready used to say that Joanna Baillie had a want of passion; but there is plenty of passion in "De Montford" and "Basil," it is rather a defective knowledge of human life. Notwithstanding her undoubted dramatic genius, Joanna Baillie was ignorant of stage requirements, and so her plays read better than they act. They will, however, always remain remarkable achievements; there is nothing womanish or weak about them, and passages of real force and fire abound.

Mrs. Inchbald, nine years older than Joanna Baillie, made her mark by comedy, not by tragedy. An actress herself, it was a long time before managers would condescend to look at her illegible MSS. The first was taken by Colman, who gave her a hundred guineas for it. It was called "A Mogul Tale, or the Descent of the Balloon," and was acted at the Haymarket on the sixth of July, 1784, she herself playing a small part in it. The hesitation of speech which she had conquered with great difficulty, appeared when she came to the words, "Since we left H—yde Pa—a—rk C—c—corner," and she very nearly broke down altogether.

"I'll Tell You What," a five-act play, produced on the fifth of August, 1785, added to her reputation as a writer for the stage, and was followed by "Such Things Are," brought out at Covent Garden on the twenty-second of May, 1787.

After this came a long list of farces and adaptations from the French. In many of them we find that easy flow of dialogue and



skilful insight into character which is shown to a much greater extent in Mrs. Inchbald's novel of "A Simple Story."

Hannah More did not attempt comedy. Her first play was founded on Metastasio's drama of "Attilio Regulo," and was called "The Inflexible Captive." It was brought out at the Bath Theatre, and when she asked Garrick to write an epilogue for it, he replied: "Write you an epilogue! Give you a pinch of snuff!" He did write one, however, which pleased her so much that she set about her tragedy of "Percy," which was acted in London with great success.

"The reception of 'Percy,'" writes Hannah to her sisters, "exceeded my most sanguine wishes. I am just returning from the second night, and it was, if possible, received more favourably than on the first. One tear is worth a thousand hands, and I had the satisfaction to see even the men shed them in abundance. . . . I will only say as Garrick does, that I have had so much flattery that I might, if I would, choke myself in my own pap."

The two sisters, Sally and Patty, trundled up from Bristol in the coach to enjoy the triumph of their much-admired sister, who was presented with a wreath of Roman laurel, and hailed as the first dramatic author of the day. Better still, four thousand copies of the play were sold in a fortnight, and guineas flowed in freely. One more play, "The Fatal Falsehood," was performed at the Adelphi, but Hannah More was at that time in such grief at the death of Garrick, that she had not the heart even to go and see it. Her sister had the full pleasure of the success, and relates a story of a maidservant coming back with red eyes, and saying, "A great many respectable people cried too." By and by, from religious scruples, Hannah More gave up writing for the stage, and contented her dramatic instincts by writing "Sacred Dramas."

Miss Mitford's experience as a dramatist was varied with strange flashes of success, alternated by long periods of suspense and disappointment. "Julian" was her first tragedy actually performed. It was brought out at Covent Garden in March, 1823, with Macready in the principal part, and was taken off at the end of the eighth night, though it was going brilliantly to crowded houses. Miss Mitford got two hundred pounds for it. She closes one of her letters by saying: "I would rather serve in a shop, rather scour floors, rather nurse children

than undergo these tremendous and interminable disputes and this unwomanly publicity."

"Foscari," her second acted play, was tossed about for four years before she could write on the outside of her letter to "Three Mile Cross" the welcome words, "Good news." It was really good news: "There was such an immense house that you might have walked over the heads in the pit, and great numbers were turned away. . . . Dear, dear Mrs. Trollope, between joy at the success and sympathy with the play, cried herself half blind. For two acts the white handkerchief was going continually."

For the "Foscari" Miss Mitford received one hundred pounds on the third, the ninth, the fifteenth, and the twentieth nights. Yet who thinks of it now? It is by "Our Village"—those breezy sketches of the country life that Miss Mitford knew so well—that she is always remembered. Another of her plays, "Rienzi," was brought out at Drury Lane on the eleventh of October, 1828, and she wrote that it was "a magnificent performance; the triumph complete and decisive; the houses crowded—you might hear a pin drop." Yet another play, "Inez de Castro," after being acted with success at Drury Lane, was brought out at the Pavilion Theatre under the title of "The Last of the Romans."

Since Miss Mitford, women have not attempted tragedy, with the exception of the two ladies who write under the name of "Michael Field." Their play, "A Question of Memory," was brought out this year at the Independent Theatre, but only at a *matinée*, as a trial performance, when it met with much adverse criticism.

## THE CAPTAIN'S CONVICTION.

### A COMPLETE STORY. CHAPTER I.

HE was a puzzle to his neighbours, was the Captain, though without any intention on his part. They couldn't understand him despite his transparent simplicity of character, or rather, perhaps, in consequence of it; for it is hard for average humanity to realise that transparent simplicity can be genuine, especially when found in connection with grey hairs and a weatherbeaten face.

For the Captain was a man who had seen much of life, though life in a larger sense than that of cities; he had made many voyages during the thirty years of his employment in the Merchant Service, and had

visited strange lands. He knew more of men than of manners, and took a wide view of human nature, and his obligations to his neighbour; nor did he seek to narrow his sympathies by any over hard-and-fast line of demarcation between his neighbour and the rest of the world. All of which things were naturally very perplexing to the commonplace inhabitants of a small provincial town; who, for the most part, believed there was something behind the old man's seeming simplicity, or—to state the matter broadly—that he was by no means such a fool as he chose to appear.

Moreover, he was a lonely man, and this seemed strange for one of his kindly nature. He had no relations; or, if he had, none ever visited him. He lived alone, save for an elderly and taciturn widow who "did" for him; alone in his ugly little house, which was one of a row of little houses each uglier than the last; and every evening he smoked his solitary pipe in the dingy square of gravel and turf that he called his front garden, as though to distinguish it from that at the back, which, however, was but a yard, and contained nothing but packing-cases that had come from nobody knew where, nobody knew when, and had remained there piled up with extraordinary neatness ever since. The row of houses formed one side of a respectable, but eminently commonplace road; a road that had nothing in the world to distinguish it from half-a-dozen others in the little town, save that it was perhaps a trifle drearier than the rest. But the Captain apparently liked the dreariness; at least, he found no fault with it, but stayed on contentedly enough; and the months grew to years, and the girl of some seventeen summers, who had lived nearly all her life on the opposite side of the road, could not recollect a time when there had been no grey-headed, weatherbeaten old gentleman, with a gruff voice and a kindly smile, in the little house over the way.

Why had the Captain ever come to live in this dull little town? He was not a native of Southbridge; he had—so far as was known—no associations with the place in the past. That, having once established himself there, he should remain, was natural enough, or so his neighbours thought; but—why had he ever come?

Maisie, the girl on the opposite side of the road, knew more of him than anybody else; she, and she alone, was privileged to visit him whenever she pleased, secure of a welcome from the old man, who—despite

his natural kindliness—was by no means easy of access to the rest of the world. He had known her from a child, and she had made her way to his heart when—at the age of six—she had presented herself at his parlour-door one fine spring morning, laden with wild flowers, and looking a veritable Queen of the May.

"I've been gatherin' primroses, and has brought you some. May I put them in water for you, Captain?" she said, and the Captain gladly consented; though he checked her, kindly but firmly, when she was about to appropriate his tobacco-jar for the purpose. From that hour the two had been sworn friends and confederates; and rarely a day passed that the child did not run across to him, full of some highly important little matters of her own, and sure of his interest and sympathy, silently though they might often be expressed.

Maisie's life, too, was a somewhat lonely one, for she was not related to the people with whom she lived, and in whose charge she had been placed when but a few months old. They cared for her conscientiously, but without affection; saw that she had plenty to eat and drink, but starved her spiritually; gave her no companionship, but more than enough liberty. Her friendship with the Captain relieved them of a great responsibility; though—had that friendship never existed—it is probable that the responsibility would never have been recognised.

Thus the solitary man and the lonely child had much in common, and as she grew older the tie between this strangely matched pair of friends grew ever stronger. The Captain was no great talker, but this mattered the less as Maisie was a born chatterbox, and had few opportunities of airing her gifts in that way for the benefit of a really appreciative audience. But the Captain was really appreciative, and she knew it; and favoured him with long arrears of irrelevant small-talk on every occasion when they met.

And yet, though the girl talked so much, it was wonderful how little the Captain really knew about her—perhaps because she knew so little herself. She spoke so frankly on all subjects, that if she said nothing about her relations it was probably because there was nothing to say; and he took everything for granted, and never for a moment realised how little she had told him about her family, and her somewhat anomalous position in the house over the road. The Captain was the least curious

of men, and troubled himself little about matters that did not concern him; so that no questions from her old friend ever suggested to Maisie that she was really strangely in the dark as to her own history, and was nearly as great a mystery to herself as the Captain was to the rest of the world.

But though the Captain asked no questions, and never even perceived in his single-minded simplicity that there might be questions to ask, Maisie herself wondered not a little. Mrs. Jenkins—the elderly widow in whose care she had grown up—to whom she had once applied for information, had put the matter aside in an off-hand manner that sufficiently discouraged further enquiry.

"Your mother asked me to do for you, and I've done it," she said gruffly. "'Ave you anythin' to say against that? Any complaint to make, or such like? 'Aven't you enough to eat, and good schoolin'—ay, the best that's to be 'ad, and plenty of it? Then what are you grumblin' at?"

"I'm not grumblin', indeed!" poor Maisie protested, truthfully enough. "I'm very grateful to you, but——"

"Oh, there's no call for gratitude neither. Your mother paid me for all as I undertook to do, and I wouldn't 'a' cheated 'er no more than the dead—which she wasn't then, nor—and she that was my school-fellow in my young days, poor dear, to say nothin' of all she went through arterwards, though it was all along o' 'er own folly and wrong-headedness—no, Maisie; I've done my duty by you if I've done no more, and there's no call for you to be pokin' and spyin' into what don't noway concern you. Your mother 'ad 'er reasons for what she did, and it isn't for you to question 'er—or me, which comes to the same thing. A bit of a girl like you, indeed!"

And Mrs. Jenkins bustled out of the room, thereby effectually putting a stop to any further discussion on the subject on that occasion; nor had the girl found courage to resume it on any subsequent opportunity that had arisen.

For Maisie had a proud and a sensitive nature, and she dreaded to hear Mrs. Jenkins speak further of her unknown mother. The subject was to her a sacred one; imagination supplied the place of memory, and the lonely girl had enshrined the image it had created in her inmost heart. Poor child, she had little enough besides to place there!

Better, far better, utter ignorance, than any knowledge that might be imparted to her by Mrs. Jenkins's desecrating voice.

## CHAPTER II.

AMONG the Captain's little peculiarities, none had so greatly impressed his observant neighbours as the manner in which he was accustomed to take his walks abroad. He was a great walker, was the Captain; yet though he would often walk for hours, he never seemed to go any distance. Up and down the quiet road where he lived he paced hour after hour, never leaving it save to cross the street at the further end to the little station, where it was his daily occupation to watch the London trains come in.

We say occupation advisedly, for he took the matter so seriously that to speak of it as an amusement would seem lacking in respect. There was a strangely alert look in his dreamy eyes when thus employed, an almost strained intensity of expression, that was utterly at variance with the old man's manner at other times, and could not but excite remark. As he stood on the platform—himself somewhat screened from observation behind the little bookstall—and watched the newly-arrived passengers pass out, the Captain seemed more alive than any one would have believed possible from seeing him at any other hour. But his animation was as brief as it was intense. No sooner had the last of the travellers passed the spot where he stood, than he turned away, and went back to resume the monotonous walk up and down his own road. He scarcely looked disappointed, those who watched him on these occasions usually averred; apparently his expectation had not been strong enough for that: but a dull listlessness seemed to fall upon him as he turned away, from which he made no attempt to rouse himself; even when, as occasionally happened, some young porter, unaccustomed to his ways, stopped him to enquire: "Was you expectin' of any one, sir?"

"No, no; not now," he would reply in the gruff voice that so strangely belied a most kindly nature. "Some other time; by the next train, perhaps."

But years had passed since this answer had first been given, and still no train had ever brought any one for the Captain; and still he never failed to watch them in with an interest that never seemed to flag.

One afternoon, when he was returning from his usual unsuccessful quest, he saw Maisie's bright face looking eagerly out of his parlour window. She sprang up as she saw him coming, and ran to meet him.

"Oh, Captain, I've been longing for you to come in!" she cried joyfully, as she

threw open the little gate. "There's news, great news, and——"

"She has come back?" he exclaimed. "I knew she would. Thank God!"

The listlessness had gone. It was the face that looked out daily at the station that the Captain now turned on Maisie, but full of a new light, a deeper emotion.

"Come back? No; but coming. How clever of you to guess; and I've never told you a word about her!"

"Where is she, my lass? I must go to her."

"She is coming to-morrow, but there is no need for you to go for her; though it's awfully good of you to think of it. If I may meet her here, out of Mrs. Jenkins's way——"

"Meet her? You? What are you talking of, child? What is she to you that——"

"My mother, Captain. I am speaking of my mother. Oh, you don't understand after all. I thought she was dead; but they never told me so, and it was all a mistake. And she has written to-day that she's coming to see me, and as Mrs. Jenkins has friends staying with her, and not a quiet corner in the house from cellar to attic, I thought that perhaps you wouldn't mind—that I might ask her to come here instead, for—oh, I don't want her to come to Mrs. Jenkins's after all the things she's said, and I haven't told her a word about my letter."

While poor Maisie scrambled and stumbled through her explanation, the Captain's face fell, and the light of anticipation died out of his eyes. Disappointment on his own account, however, did not make him less sympathetic with the girl's delight; and he told her she was welcome to make use of his house, promising that he would leave her in undisputed possession of the parlour till eight o'clock, if her mother could stay so late.

"And I'll tell Mrs. Webb to give you a cup of tea, and something to eat," he added hospitably. "She'll know what your mother will like, for she lived with two single ladies before she came to me. Make your mind easy about that, Maisie, and—— But what's in the wind now? Isn't my course to your liking?"

"Not at all, for I want you to meet my mother, not to avoid her. I want to show her that I have one friend in the world." The girl tried to speak lightly, knowing the Captain's manly abhorrence of a scene; but her voice trembled despite all her

efforts to control it, and her great blue eyes filled with tears.

"She doesn't seem to have been much of a friend to you, my lass; and you not knowing whether she was alive or dead!" he said gravely; this aspect of the question evidently presenting itself to him for the first time. "What has she been about all these years?"

"She will tell me all when we meet—oh, I'm sure she had some good reason, or she'd never have let me grow up knowing nothing of her, or of my father either."

"And your father? Is he living, too?"

Something in the Captain's tone implied that in that case he didn't think much of him, and Maisie hastened to defend the parent who—as she had that day ascertained for the first time beyond the possibility of doubt—was no longer in a position to defend himself.

"He died before I was born. That was why my mother went away."

"I should have thought it would have been another reason for her staying," the old man said, with unwonted severity. "Because you'd lost one parent seems a queer reason to give for taking away the other. But there, it isn't for me to judge her. It mayn't have been all plain sailing in those waters she was in, and the winds may have been contrary. Anyway, she's tacked now, and is coming on a straight course. Is she like you, lass?" he added abruptly.

"I don't know. There's no one I could ask but Mrs. Jenkins, and—I would rather not know than ask her!"

"Is that so? Well, well, you'll see for yourself to-morrow."

"And so will you, Captain. Promise me that you'll be in. Remember you're the only friend I have, and—and I am a little bit nervous about meeting her, though she is my mother. I declare I feel quite frightened lest she should be disappointed in me. Of course, I wouldn't own as much to anybody but you."

"You've no call to be frightened, my dear. The mother 'ud be hard to please who was disappointed in you, even if she'd taken a deal more pains with your loading and fitting out than yours seems to have done. She should be a proud and a thankful woman, say I."

"Then be here, and say it!" Maisie laughed. "I'm not to meet her at the station, but to wait for her at Mrs. Jenkins's, or any other quiet place. Think of calling Mrs. Jenkins's a quiet place!"



Why, she's always talking ; or if she isn't, her daughters are. No, I'm going to write and ask her to come here ; and then when you come home from seeing the three-fifteen train in, you'll find us waiting for you."

"She's not coming from London, then?"

"Not to-morrow. She is not very strong, she says ; so she will break her journey at Wilminster, and come on by a local train." The girl was silent a moment, and then added regretfully : "And when I told you I had news, you thought the friend had come whom you have expected so long?"

"I thought so, maybe. But don't fret yourself about that, my dear. She'll come in her own time, and no thoughts of mine can make her sooner or later. I'll come in after the three-fifteen, then — unless, of course, she comes by it."

"Of course," said Maisie.

But he was not speaking of her mother, and she knew it.

### CHAPTER III.

"SHE" did not come by it, apparently ; at least, at the accustomed hour on the following day the Captain might have been seen returning from the station as usual ; and the Captain was alone.

He walked slowly, for he felt no great inclination to return home, thinking he should make but a poor third at the interview between Maisie and her unknown mother. He would infinitely have preferred to pace up and down his quiet road till the time should come for her departure ; and nothing but his promise to the girl could have overcome his natural reluctance to disturb her in this first hour of her renewed intercourse with one who must necessarily be so much nearer and dearer to her than himself. The Captain was not jealous, far from it ; on the contrary, he was truly and honestly glad that Maisie should come under some other womanly influence than that of the estimable but unsympathetic Mrs. Jenkins. He was really fond of her ; far too fond to grudge her any good thing that might happen to come in her way just because he might himself cease to fill quite so large a space in her thoughts in consequence ; but he did not see of what possible use he could be to the girl just now, and anticipated no pleasure from this meeting with a woman who—so far as he was in a position to judge—had behaved very heartlessly to her child. The Captain

was anything but a hard man ; he could forgive a woman much ; but there was one thing he could not forgive, and that was indifference or hardness where her children were concerned.

But there was neither indifference nor hardness in the face of the woman who was sitting in the shabby little parlour whither he was reluctantly bending his steps. It was a singularly beautiful face still, though worn and haggard ; and the eyes were full of a passionate tenderness as they rested on Maisie, and met the gaze of those eager, upturned eyes that resembled them so closely. Not a hard woman certainly, or only hard to herself, for there were lines about the mouth that seemed to tell of a will of iron and an invincible self-control : lines that scarcely harmonised with the love-light in her deep blue eyes, or the soft caressing tones of her exquisitely modulated voice.

And this was Maisie's mother ! This beautiful, gracious woman, who looked like a queen, and spoke as Maisie had never heard any one speak before—as she had not dreamed any mere mortal like herself could ever speak ! The girl was in an ecstasy of wonder and delight. She did not feel nervous any more ; she had not felt nervous save for one brief moment before she had fairly looked in her mother's face, or been clasped in her mother's arms. She was too happy to be nervous ; too instinctively sure of her mother's love to be troubled with self-conscious doubts and fears.

"Oh, mother, mother, how I have wanted you !" she cried. "Why have you left me all these years alone?"

"I had no choice, darling. I could not be with you always, and it would have been worse than nothing to meet only to lose each other again. Besides, there were other reasons—I had your father's wishes to consider. You must believe me, Maisie, when I tell you that I acted for the best."

"And now you will never go away any more?"

"No, dear ; not exactly that. But when I do go away I shall take you with me."

"Oh, delightful, mother ! And when shall we go ? And where ?" Maisie asked eagerly. She had thrown herself on the floor at her mother's feet, and her arms were resting on her lap as she looked up at her with sparkling eyes. "Oh, I hope it will be ever so far away from Mrs. Jenkins."

"Don't you like her, then?"

"I detest her ; and so would you if you'd

lived with her as long as I have. She told me that you and she were schoolfellows, mother!" dropping her voice to an awestruck whisper. "Surely that can't have been so; there must have been some mistake!"

"No, child; she and I were girls together, and went to the same school; but she never went to another; I did."

"And a very different one, too, I should think. Mother, how would you have felt if you had found me talking my native tongue with Mrs. Jenkins's easy familiarity? Would you have been proud of your daughter?"

"I insisted on her sending you to the best school in the town, my dear, and I had reason to know that it was a very good one. She wrote me word from time to time that you were getting on well, and forwarded me your reports."

"In fact, she was in constant communication with you, while all the time she allowed me to believe you dead," the girl said slowly. "Oh, she never told me so in so many words—I don't mean that; but she meant me to believe it, all the same. Mother, what was her motive?"

"To save herself trouble, I suppose. So long as you thought me dead, you wouldn't ask her troublesome questions; and I had bound her over not to tell you about me for fear of unsettling you."

"But why?—Oh, of course, you knew best; but still—I would rather have known. It would have given me something to look forward to."

"Poor child! Then your life has not been a happy one?"

"It would have been wretched but for the Captain. Oh, mother, you won't mind living within reach of Southbridge, will you? I know he would miss me if we went away, and nothing would ever make him leave the place."

"Yet you tell me he is quite alone here. What can the attraction be to a man of that stamp?" her mother said thoughtfully.

"There is some one he expects to meet here some day—some old friend of whom he has lost sight for years. I don't know why, but the Captain is convinced she will come here, and that if he left Southbridge even for a day he might miss her."

There was a sound of footsteps on the little paved path in the front garden, distinctly audible through the wide-open window; but though Maisie heard it in the pause that followed her last words, she did not recognise it. The Captain never walked

with a hesitating, undecided step like that; and the Captain never lingered on the doorstep as though afraid to enter his own house.

"He is a faithful friend, this Captain of yours; and what did you say his name was?"

"I don't think I told you, for nobody ever calls him anything but the Captain; but—Ah, here he comes!"

And the Captain entered.

But was it indeed the Captain?

He was so changed that Maisie scarcely knew him as he strode into the room, he looked so young, so eager, so full of life and resolution; and he never saw Maisie at all! He just looked past her to her mother, who rose to her feet, pale as death, and stood gazing at him with eyes full of wonder, and love, and something that was almost like fear.

"James!" she cried, in a strained, unnatural voice. "James! Come back from the dead!"

"Marianne, my 'darling!'" and he caught her in his arms in a passionate embrace. "I knew you would come at last!"

But she broke away from him, and stood at a little distance, her stately figure drawn to its full height.

"Wait till you know all!" she said, speaking very low. "I have come back, yes; though without intending it. I thought you were dead. But now—when you have heard my story it will be for you to decide whether I remain."

"What's done's done. I know why you left me, and never blamed you overmuch. It was my fault too, for I should have borne in mind that you were but a child, and wanted gayer company than a weather-beaten old hulk like me. I've been waiting here to tell you so for years, for I made sure you'd drift back to the port you'd first sailed from, and—"

"You know why I left you?" she repeated. "Do you, I wonder? Or do you only know the charitable construction my friends put on my conduct?"—bitterly. "I left you because I was mad with temper and self-will, and craved for the old excitement, the old life you so hated, and from which you had thought to save me. I had grown used to it, you see, and I never dreamed that you really cared so much; your sister took care of that. But I don't blame her—overmuch—either! She's dead now, and she was right enough in thinking I wasn't worthy to be your wife."

Well, I soon repented; even before I found how cruelly I had been slandered to you; and—there was another reason."

For the first time her eyes wandered from her husband's face to where Maisie was standing, pale and bewildered, watching this strange interview with mingled feelings of wonder and dismay. Then she turned to the Captain again, and said passionately:

"I was coming back to you—then—at once—to tell you all; and I heard that your ship had gone down at sea, and every soul was drowned. I thought it was a judgement upon me, James, and it nearly killed me. When I went back to the stage again, it was for your daughter's sake."

"My daughter?"

The Captain's gruff voice shook, and the colour deepened in his weatherbeaten cheek.

"Yes, your daughter. Come here, Maisie, my child—you need not be ashamed to own her, James; she has been brought up far away from her mother, and all the contaminations of a life like mine. I had to work for her, and I worked—in my own way. God knows it was often hard enough! And I denied myself the comfort of seeing her, of hearing her sweet voice, for your sake; as an act of reparation to your memory. What merely physical torture could equal that as a penance, think you? I have tried to make amends. Since she was six months old I have not seen her till to-day. And now—now—James, my work is done. They tell me in all human probability I have only a few months more to live. I meant to have passed them with her, but now—it is for you to decide."

"I have been waiting for you all these years," said the Captain hoarsely, "and, thank God, you've come into port at last! You've had your say, my lass, but don't talk of putting to sea again; for it hurts me, and Maisie and I don't deserve it."

Yes, the Captain's long waiting was over. His conviction had been justified by the result.

## BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

### PART IV.

ALICE was not very communicative in the dark solitude of the cab. She shut her eyes and leant her tired young head against the corner cushion.

"Don't ask me questions yet," she said. "I am all upside down. I don't under-

stand things rightly, and I haven't decided what to do."

"To do! You surely don't mean to do anything so near your marriage?" shrieked Miss Downing above the rattling wheels. "It was all nonsense about those flowers. Arthur will explain it."

"If it were only the flowers!"

It was of no use to attempt to know more until they were at home. Then Alice would fain have slipped off to her bedroom unquestioned, but her aunt stopped her. "Be sensible, Alice. You always set up for strong common-sense. Don't begin to be jealous so late in the day. The flowers——"

"Oh! the flowers! What matter about the flowers?" cried the girl, stamping her foot. "He has neglected and insulted me the whole night. He sent her my flowers—he gave her my dances——"

"But you danced with Dick when you were engaged to Arthur. I saw you do it."

Alice's face changed a little. "That was only the first dance. He forgot to take me in to supper, and the dance after it, to sit with her in the conservatory. It is no use to make excuses for him."

"You will see it all quite another way in the morning," said Aunt Robina confidently. "Arthur will come first thing to ask what happened—what brought you home so early."

"No, he will not," said Alice, with solemn certainty. "Good night. It is no use talking so late."

She prophesied falsely. When Miss Downing appeared in the breakfast-room next morning, at nine o'clock, Arthur rushed to meet her. He had been waiting since eight, but had requested that nobody should be disturbed.

"How is Alice?" he cried. "Why did she leave last night without telling me?"

"You know best," said Miss Downing shortly, for, however mad it might be of Alice to dream of breaking off her engagement, Arthur had behaved strangely and deserved reproof.

"Surely it was not all about those wretched flowers?" he exclaimed. "Why, how could she possibly believe I sent them to Miss Boyd?"

"Did you not give her some reason to believe it?"

"None whatever. I hardly spoke to Miss Boyd all the evening. Why do you look like that? Do you think I am telling lies? I danced with her when Alice had

deserted me for Freeland, because I had to be civil after that bother about the flowers. I only danced that once with her all the night."

"Alice says you gave her all her dances."

"All her dances! Why, there were none to give her. Alice gave them to Dick, Tom, and Harry until something after supper, and when I went to find her I found our dance was over and she had gone. She gave me the slip at supper-time, and I never beheld her after. I danced with nobody at all, except that first dance with Miss Boyd. I was dead tired all the evening; in fact, I fell asleep in the conservatory, and missed our dance that way; unless she had left before it came on."

"Were you in the conservatory alone?" Miss Downing asked sharply.

"Well, I did go into the conservatories with Miss Boyd. We went to look for Alice. It was hardly complimentary to Miss Boyd, for I fell asleep there and awoke with a most awful headache, and very stiff and cold, and quite alone. I stumbled along to find you all, but nearly everybody was gone. Lady Strange looked so queer, and was so stand-offish, as if she thought I was drunk, though I had not tasted anything all night. Strange looked queer, too, and was uncordial. Somebody—Frank Sandys, I think—said that Alice had gone home ill, so I hurried off thinking that might be why they looked so solemn, but it was two o'clock, and I could not come here to ask."

"I will tell Alice you are here," said Miss Downing, leaving the room. "She may not be up yet."

To her surprise, Alice was not only up, but dressed—and dressed for travelling in hat and cloak. A strapped dress-basket and a large milliner's basket stood in the middle of the floor. The room, so dainty and bright of wont, looked desolate; stray scraps of packing paper, ends of string, and some luggage labels lay about the floor, and all the pretty, homely nicknacks of daily use were gone from the dressing-table, leaving it squalid in its bareness. Alice looked up from buttoning her boots to say:

"Breakfast ready? I'm going up to town to see this dress altered."

"Surely that is not necessary?" cried Miss Downing, relieved that there still seemed to be some contemplated use for a white satin dress. "Arthur is downstairs." Alice frowned. "He is so distressed. He heard you were ill last night."

"Then please send my breakfast to me here."

"You silly child, why? Go downstairs at once and make it up. You are quite, quite mistaken. He has explained everything to me. It was all your fault. He is in the most dreadful state of grief. Don't be rash, Alice, and do in a moment what can't be undone in a lifetime."

"I am not going to do anything. It is all done," she said; but her voice softened. "I don't know how he can explain things. I thought I would go to the Kinnairds for a day or two, and make my dress the excuse. I will send a telegram to Cousin Millicent. They are at Colonel Kinnaird's, in Oxford Terrace, for a week or two before—going to Norway." Miss Downing's heart sank again at the pause. The Kinnairds had been going to take Pyncholk and the wedding on their northward way. "Their own house in South Kensington is all upside down—drains wrong. It would be better not to see Arthur."

But she spoke so uncertainly that Miss Downing said coaxingly: "Just run down to see him now, and you will find that it is all right."

Reluctantly Alice went, and Miss Downing waited. She would give them ten minutes. It really couldn't take longer. She was hungry, and ten minutes seemed very long indeed.

She went and coughed gently at the dining-room door before she opened it. To her surprise, there sat Alice alone, composedly pouring out coffee.

"I didn't wait," she said. "It is getting cold, and I have not much time. The train goes at 10.15."

"Where is Arthur?"

"Gone to the Rectory, Mary says. I have not seen him."

If Miss Downing was astonished before, she was confounded now. She was a very simple-minded person, and could not be expected to see through a stone wall. A broken-hearted, forsaken maiden who could eat her breakfast was an enigma past her powers of solution. Arthur was certainly behaving very badly indeed, and though it was impossible that the quarrel could continue to the length of ending the engagement, he deserved punishment, and Alice had her dignity and that of her relatives to maintain.

"Please order the cab from the 'Strange Arms,'" said Alice, "and tell Mary to leave this telegram at the post-office as she passes, and lose no time."



Miss Downing went to find Mary, and asked her distressfully:

"Why did Mr. Knollys go to the Rectory? Did he say anything?"

"He went just after you left the room, ma'am," said Mary. "He was talking to himself first, for I was just coming into the room with the eggs, and he didn't see me. He jumped up, saying, 'That's it—that will put it all right in a jiffy.' Then he told me to tell you he would be back in a minute."

"I think that telegram need not go yet," said Miss Downing. "You might order the cab. We can send it away if it isn't wanted."

But the cab came, and Arthur did not. Alice got in, with a fixed, white face, and said nothing. As she passed the Rectory he came flying over the lawn, but the driver was looking the other way at some cattle, and Alice did not stop him. When her boxes were being lifted down at the station, Arthur rushed up, breathless.

"For Heaven's sake, Alice, where are you going?" he panted.

"To town," she replied, watching the descent of her wedding-dress into a truck.

"Why? Are you mad? Surely you do not believe——"

"I have not time for explanations," she said coldly. "I will write. Please don't make a scene."

"Explanations! What is there to explain? Oh, my dearest, I have come to explain."

She paused.

"I went to the Rectory. I asked to see the address on the box the flowers came in."

"Well?"

But there was hope in her eyes, though her voice was constrained to hauteur.

"It was certainly in my own writing, but I saw at once what had happened; I wrote her name instead of yours in a fit of abstraction."

"How odd!"

The bell rang, and she moved away. He followed, saying:

"Don't you understand? I was buried in my work—my head was full of it——"

"Please don't keep me. People are looking at us," she interrupted. "I must take my ticket."

She turned deliberately into the queue at the ticket-office, whither he certainly could not follow to plead. He waited in suppressed anguish until she emerged, last of the line, her ticket between her teeth while she fastened her purse.

"I can't wait," she cried indistinctly, as if through the ticket.

They were already slamming carriage doors. She gave him not another glance, but sprang into a carriage whose door was held open for her by a porter, and in another second she was out of sight.

He stood staring after the receding train like a lost soul gazing at heaven's closed gates.

"The girl must be bewitched," he said presently, aloud.

"Or you are, Knollys," said a voice behind, recalling him to actualities.

He turned with a start and recognised Dick Freeland.

"I beg your pardon," said the latter, laughing. "You looked as if you were enchanted to the spot, regardless of rushing trucks. Your nerves are out of order, dear boy—too much devotion to art. I am running north for a few days' shooting. Suppose you come with me, now you're off duty here—picture finished, I mean," hastily, seeing he had put his foot into something. "You look as if you wanted a holiday."

"I want nothing of the sort," cried Arthur angrily. "I have engagements here, and I am going off for a holiday presently, as you know."

"Oh, I am glad; I thought—well, good-bye; this is my train," as another rushed up from the opposite direction.

"What did the fellow mean?" pondered Arthur. "What does Alice mean? What do they all mean?"

He left the station, and returned to seek light from Miss Downing.

"Has Alice thrown me over for Freeland?" he demanded. "Why are they all treating me as if I were played out? What have I done?"

Miss Downing had been turning matters over in her mind. Alice was extremely obstinate, and there was no doubt Arthur had behaved very badly indeed. The only reasonable explanation of his conduct, even from his own account, was that he had had too much wine, which made things considerably worse. He had fallen asleep in the conservatory, and the Stranges had looked coldly upon him after. Men always say they have "taken nothing" under those circumstances. He had often had a curious dazed expression of late. He had accounted for it by overwork and irregular meals. Was it not too well known that artists kept themselves going by tobacco and spirits when they were too busy to eat proper

meals? Alice would be well rid of such a husband, and Dick Freeland would come forward again and be a much better match.

So he got no comfort from his intended aunt-in-law. She knew nothing, she declared, except that Alice had gone to town to see a dressmaker. She had noticed herself that they seemed to be on bad terms last night. It was very unpleasant about the flowers. He could not expect Alice to be pleased that his head had been so much fuller of another girl than of herself, that he had written her very name instead of Alice's. As for Mr. Freeland, he had always admired Alice. Arthur knew better than Miss Downing did what reason he might have for qualms. Alice would, no doubt, write to him. Yes, Miss Downing would of course give him Alice's London address—Fifty, Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park. There was no reason why he should not write to her; indeed, every reason why he should—the sooner the better.

The last words Arthur took as a hint that Miss Downing had not time for farther discussion of the subject. She wrote the address on an envelope and gave it to him. He went at once to his inn to write.

Sheet after sheet he covered and tore up. He could not explain himself. Every exculpation read improbable, weak, and self-accusatory. He would go first for a long walk to clear his brain. He had nothing else to do, his picture being finished.

He walked far into the country and lost his way. There came a drenching storm of rain, and he had to wait at a little farmhouse for two mortal hours. He did not reach Pyncholk until seven o'clock. The September day was over, but the rising full moon and the twilight made places and figures distinctly visible. As he passed the Rectory garden, he was hailed by a friendly voice:

"Knollys, is that you? Come in and dine with us. We are quite alone, and we hear you are also. We will cheer you up for the loss of the lady. Never mind your clothes."

He was tired, and hungry, and lonely, and he accepted the Rector's invitation. Mrs. Waterton was coming downstairs as they went in together, handsome and stately, in black velvet. She received him with a little stiffness. She, too, seemed to be injured in the matter of those baneful flowers; her guest had been placed in an awkward position. It did not occur to him that she was vexed with her husband for bringing in a guest at literally the last

minute, when there was barely enough dinner to go round.

The dinner-gong had sounded before he appeared in the drawing-room, cleaned and brushed as far as available resources would permit. The Rector at once gave his arm to Miss Boyd, and led the way to the dining-room, and Arthur followed with his hostess, his artistic soul cheered by the contemplation of Miss Boyd's graceful back and shoulders, draped in black lace.

"Lydia is going away to-morrow," said Mrs. Waterton in an undertone. "I am so sorry."

"Indeed!" he answered, slightly interested. It was a pity she had not gone two days earlier. He disliked her with a perfect rage of dislike. Was she not at the bottom of all this trouble with Alice?—through no fault of hers, perhaps—but she was there all the same.

He was glad that Mrs. Waterton stuck to the past fashion of tall table plants. Her reason to-night for filling up her table with palms and bushy ferns was to conceal the scantiness of provisions. His reason for liking arboreal decoration was that he could see very little of Miss Boyd, who sat opposite. She was really offensively plain. He addressed all his conversation to his host and hostess. He discoursed quite fluently and warmly on the Parish Councils Bill and its probable effects upon Church interests, and listened with deep interest to Mrs. Waterton's views of somebody's "perfectly fiendish wickednesses." He never read newspapers, so was a listener perfectly ready to accept any views which were presented to him by such experts. Miss Boyd apparently took even less interest in politics, for she never spoke, and was left altogether out of the conversation, except when Mrs. Waterton said:

"You have been so long out of England, Lydia, you must get these things up;" and "That very nice young Smith who was introduced to you last night is County Councillor for this place. If they were all like him!"

All at once Arthur found himself physically weary of his pains to avoid her eyes, and he looked straight through the thickly-foliaged plant between to meet them and defy them. He was quite mortified to find that she was not looking at him at all, but with smiling attention at Mr. Waterton, who was now discoursing of anarchist outrages. To his surprise she looked almost handsome. Her cheeks were a little flushed, and her eyes were large and

quite dark. The pupils could contract and dilate like a cat's. He watched her for some moments with attention and impunity. He believed she was avoiding his eyes in her turn. She had a splendid throat and bust. What a pity she could not find a model to sit for a new face! Why would she not look at him? She was offended, angry. It was not his fault that that never-exhausted mistake was made about the bouquet, but he should have turned the incident off with more tact. He should not have let her feel disappointed and humiliated. That was Alice's fault, who ought to have seen at once how the accident had happened and been generous enough to let Miss Boyd enjoy her fictitious honours. If Alice had not betrayed him by her demonstrative anger, all would have ended happily. It was very hard on Miss Boyd, who was really the only innocent one of the three. He blamed himself, of course, for his stupidity, but not so much as he blamed Alice, whose head was not muddled by work and worry, and who should have seen at once and been prompt to act gracefully. He must put himself right with Miss Boyd. He did not like to think she would leave Pyncholk to-morrow with such an uncomfortable parting impression. . . .

"—do you remember, Mr. Knollys? Was it in ninety-two or ninety-three?"

Was what? He looked as if he had been caught reading Miss Boyd's letters, he gave such a guilty start, hearing himself thus pointedly referred to. Ninety-two or ninety-three what?

"Ninety-two," he said hastily. "I think—"

Then Mrs. Waterton rose, and he gathered his wits together in time to open the door.

"Don't stay all night discussing Parish Councils," said Miss Boyd, smiling as she passed him.

Then she was not irremediably offended! It was very kind and large-minded of her to speak to him so. In the revulsion of feeling he quite liked her. He would have followed her at once to the drawing-room had not custom, that most potent of forces, held him back.

"Why has Mr. Knollys come to-night?" Miss Boyd asked of her hostess when they were seated by the drawing-room fire with screens and footstools.

"Because he must always bungle and blunder, and do what he isn't wanted to do," said Mrs. Waterton inhospiably. "It was most provoking of Henry to ask him. I saw he dared not eat lest he should clear

the larder. A spoonful of soup, a cutlet, and half a partridge. What is that for a healthy young man?"

"He did not seem in good appetite," said Lydia. "He wouldn't mind. Lovers who have been left by their sweethearts shouldn't want to eat. He is nervous and ill."

"Perhaps he came to see you," said Mrs. Waterton sarcastically. "He stared at you enough."

"How could he come to see me if he is engaged to that girl?"

"I shouldn't be surprised if that is off. It was a very hurried sort of thing. I always thought she did it to pique Dick Freeland into proposing to her. Perhaps they settled matters all round last night. It would be much better for her to marry a well-to-do man, whom we all know, than an obscure artist."

"I should prefer the artist," said Miss Boyd reflectively. "Not this particular one, of course, so you need not look shocked. I know it would not be proper to say it. I ought to say that I infinitely prefer liberty to work for my own living—but I don't."

"But, my dear, you seem so—successful!" stammered the rectoress, amazed. She did not like to say "so rich." Then she thought Miss Boyd had, perhaps, lost money on the Stock Exchange. Her appearance was so very unlike that of a person who had as yet worked for her living.

"I have made a good deal of money, but I find it difficult to keep going without taking a partner."

Mrs. Waterton was old-fashioned: a person who considered money-making by a woman a delicate and secret matter, to be pitied but not enquired into, like some shameful family trouble. She was very much astonished that Lydia Boyd should be concerned in business; taking a partner sounded like something in the City; but women are so very astonishing nowadays. Nothing should stagger one in modern development. If Dukes' sons might go into trade, why not women? One did not set old-world ideas more violently awry than the other.

"It is so clever of you," she said vaguely.

Miss Boyd did not answer at once. She was thoughtfully contemplating the hot heart of the fire. When she looked up to speak, Mrs. Waterton had fallen into her usual little after-dinner snooze.

Almost immediately after, Arthur came in.

"Mr. Waterton has letters to write for

the night mail," he said, lowering his voice to a whisper in honour of his hostess's slumbers.

"I have a letter to write, too," said Miss Boyd, rising softly as she spoke. "Will you kindly carry the small lamp for me into the back drawing-room?"

He obeyed. As soon as he set the lamp down on the writing-table and saw paper and pens, he remembered that he, too, had a letter to write.

"I am afraid I must go home," he said hesitatingly. "I also have letters——"

He stopped. What if he had lost the address? He felt in his pockets. He pulled out two letters, then an envelope addressed in a thin, feminine hand.

"I thought I had lost it," he cried, looking up to Miss Boyd with laughing relief.

She looked at him steadily. The laugh died out of his eyes in a great awe. She was glorious as she stood there in the dim room, outside the circle of light confined within the radius of the thick shade; dim and vague herself, her white neck and arms gleaming from the blackness of her dress, and her strange eyes shining like the jewels round her throat, all the faint outer rays of light gathered into their lucent depths.

"Don't go yet," she said gently. Her

voice was sweet and vibrant as a reed. "Write the letter here."

"Any message for Wedderburn, Georgina?" asked the Rector, waking up his wife. "I am sending John to catch the night mail."

"Quick—your name—in full," said Miss Boyd in the back drawing-room. Then she appeared in the hall closing a letter. "This for the post, please," she said to the groom, giving it into his hands, and returning to the back drawing-room as she came by the door opening upon the hall.

"What has become of Knollys?" asked the Rector, having dismissed John and returned to his wife.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mrs. Waterton sleepily. "I don't think he came up. Where is Lydia?"

"She came into the hall with a letter—ah! here she comes—and Knollys, too!" as they emerged from behind the portière, Arthur blinking, as if he too had been enjoying a post-prandial forty winks.

"I believe Mr. Knollys has been asleep all the time I was writing my letter in the morning-room," she said, laughing. "I found him as sound as a top. After pretending he had letters to write, too!"

"Well, we must have some whist now," said the Rector.

Now Ready,

THE

## EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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### A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manoeuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

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WITH ALMANACK FOR 1895.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

## A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

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CALENDAR FOR 1895.

## A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

### CHAPTER I. WITHIN THE CASTLE WARD.

LADY TYRREL's fancy ball promised to be one of the events of the season. It was fixed for the close of the Ascot week, when all the fine people had spread themselves in temporary quarters over the heaths and glades of Windsor Forest, and it would form an appropriate finish to a very brilliant period. Sir Charles Tyrrel was not a young man. He disapproved of betting, and his principles, as the head of a great City firm, were known to be austere; but his wife always got together a distinguished party for the race week, for "The Woodlands" was a capital house, furnished with a regular cordon bleu in the way of a chef, and a cellar of the highest reputation. And as the house party embraced a Royal Duke, and all the best people were promised for the ball, naturally enough the smaller fishes were eager enough to be included in the swim. The interest aroused in the fixture had spread as far as the Royal

Borough of Windsor, and it had caused debate in the mess-room of the Royal Life Guards who were quartered there, and who were invited "en masse." The invitations had specified "uniform or fancy dress," but it was felt that simply to go in uniform would be rather flat, while if fancy dress were adopted, some kind of unity in costume and grouping should mark the detachment.

"Something quiet and effective in black and white," suggested an æsthetic captain.

"Why not a nigger troupe with bones and tambourines?" proposed rosy Lieutenant Bob, who had just joined from Sandhurst and Eton.

"And hide your charming blushes, Bob. That won't do," cried a senior. "Besides, none of the girls would come near us for fear of being blacked."

"Brigands, then," said Bob, with enthusiasm.

"You're too fat, Bob, like Tracy Tupman."

The discussion was adjourned; but the same perplexity was disturbing many minds, among others that of a pretty little woman who, at the same moment, was

breakfasting in a house-boat on the river, a charming house-boat in white and gold, bearing the legend "The Inconstant," anchored not far from Surley Hall. Madame D'Antin was as trim and dainty as a Dresden shepherdess, with the same lovely complexion of rose-pink and enamel, and all this was so naturally suggestive of a costume to match, completed by a crook and a basket of pink roses. Such was the opinion of her husband, a dark, sardonic-looking man, who was reading his Paris "Figaro" on the other side of the dainty breakfast service. But Madame did not care for such an obvious arrangement.

"I would go as Titania," she said hesitatingly, "if you would be Oberon."

"Bah!" replied the husband disdainfully. "No, Julie, don't let us bracket ourselves in any case. You have your own rôle. Leave me to mine."

"And that means baccarat or poker," said Julie to herself as Monsieur D'Antin, lighting a cigarette, buried himself in some abstruse calculations in which a betting book and Racing Calendar were alternately consulted. Julie yawned. "You are very amusing, Ernest," she said peevishly. "But never mind, Charles Tyrrel is coming presently, and then I shall no longer be dull."

D'Antin looked up with an approving glance.

"That is right, Julie, make the most of the sprightly youth. We shall want him by-and-by."

The slightest shock in the world, no greater, indeed, than the vigorous double knock inflicts upon mansions founded on the solid earth, here gave notice that some visitor was coming aboard. It was actually the sprightly youth who had just been in question, a brown, sunburnt young fellow with a frank and pleasant countenance, who was graciously received by Madame D'Antin.

"And you come just à propos," she cried, "to tell me what to wear for your step-mother's ball!"

Young Tyrrel was a little embarrassed at the responsibility thrust upon him. Madame D'Antin would be charming in any costume she might appear in. But he had a favour to ask, and his embarrassment increased in the asking—would Madame D'Antin be so angelically good as to take May Wyvern with her to the ball? Madame D'Antin hesitated, a little chilled at the request. But looking towards her husband, who still seemed immersed in his books, he raised

his eyes in a quick glance which said "yes" in the plainest terms.

But there were difficulties in the way. Miss Wyvern lived with her grandfather, a one-armed veteran, one of the old Military Knights of Windsor, in the lower ward of the Royal Castle. A fine old soldier was Major Wyvern.

In years he seem'd, but not impair'd by years.

But the vigour of his intellect had retained some equally vigorous prejudices, and the very name of Tyrrel was obnoxious to him. Sir Charles was no better disposed to the old soldier. Some secret cause put these two men, who were old enough to have known better, in violent antagonism. Had they quarrelled at the parish vestry, or was it some unlucky speculation that rankled in the breast of one or the other? Charles did not know. But it was very unlucky, for May was the dearest creature in the world, and he, Charles, loved her most devotedly.

This confession, made after Monsieur D'Antin had left, was received by Madame D'Antin with slightly scornful sympathy.

"You are very foolish young people, for you are entirely dependent on your father, are you not? But your profession! You were an attaché when we knew you in Paris."

"Such is my miserable vocation," said Charles dolefully; "an attaché, unattached and unpaid—a cancelled postage stamp with the gum off."

"But, my poor dégonné, you may be employed again. Still, it is not a profession to live upon; and May, she has just enough fortune to buy shoes and stockings, and an occasional frock."

"And delightful shoes and charming frocks they are," sighed Charles.

Madame D'Antin laughed half contemptuously.

"My poor Charles, you are indeed far gone. Well, you must be helped, I suppose, to your own undoing. But there is another difficulty. We may elude the Major, but how shall we evade Zamora?"

Zamora was an African, black as night, and May's faithful slave and watchful guardian, vigilant dragon and patient beast of burden, all in one. A quiet, taciturn young woman in a general way, but a flame of fire when aroused. She was small and well-made, and came direct from some tribe in the far interior of a finer mould and lithier frame than the negroes of the coast, and of a higher mental calibre.

If Zamora disapproved, the thing would seem impossible.

"But Zamora is our friend!" cried Charles. "She is delighted with the notion of the ball, and she only longs to see it herself. Couldn't you manage that, dear Madame?"

"Wait!" said Madame D'Antin, fixing her eyes on some imaginary object. "Yes, I have it," she said, after a pause. "I will go as Madame Dubarry, and Zamora will be my black page. White satin and diamonds, and my fair doll's face, with Zamora—the page, you know—in red and black, and a yellow turban wreathed with pearls. Will not that be effective? I will order the dresses at once."

"And May?" asked Charles, as Madame D'Antin flew to her writing-table, and began to dash off a telegram.

"Oh, we will arrange something for her," said Madame D'Antin abstractedly. "And now, Charlie, paddle yourself ashore and send off this telegram for me. And come back to luncheon, for I expect May will be here, and we can settle everything."

Having executed his commission at the post-office, Charles Tyrrel strolled lazily up Hill Street, looking upward at the "hundred steps" if perchance he might catch a glimpse of the flowing robe of his charming May descending from the castled steep to the world below. But he saw nothing. If he had been endowed with preternaturally acute vision, if the high towers and crenellated walls had been made transparent for him, he would have seen his sweetheart reclining on a grassy slope in front of the quaint red-brick dwellings of the old Knights, engrossed in the pages of some novel or story, while her grandfather, seated on a bench just above, smoked his briar-root placidly and conversed with a visitor from town. The visitor was a man approaching middle age, pale, with light sandy whiskers, and a pleasant, humorous expression in features otherwise insignificant. This was Cousin Perkins—Harry Perkins of the outer Bar, who was the old Major's confidential adviser, and May's trustee, humble servant, and well-wisher; the last to a degree that was only indifferently reciprocated by the young lady in question.

"I don't feel quite easy," said the Major, in a low voice, "about this Madame D'Antin. As Julie Fouchet I knew her family very well, connected with the fabrique in Normandy—Protestant, precise, philanthropic, rich—but Julie married seems a bird of another feather."

"Rather a gay kind of bird, indeed," said Perkins, in the quiet undertone that was natural to him; "but I think she's all right. People laugh at her because she is enamoured of her husband, who does not seem flattered by her attentions. And if she flirts a good deal, it is all to bring the legitimate one to her feet."

"Well, that's to her credit, perhaps," said the Major indulgently. But what was to be said about the man himself?

Well, Mr. Perkins admitted that he was of honourable lineage. The Château D'Antin, now a tumble-down old ruin, was still in his possession, and he had inherited a modest paternal fortune, which he had spent in a few years of gaiety in Paris. Then, quite ruined, he had gone to Africa in the company of Brassica, the great explorer, and strange to say had come back with another fortune some years after, acquired, said rumour, by traffic in ivory, or perhaps slaves. Before that was completely gone, he had met and captivated Mademoiselle Fouchet, the rich heiress, whose parents reluctantly consented to their union. Between them they had made the money fly, and rumour had it that not long ago the D'Antins were seriously embarrassed; but since then their affairs seemed to be re-established. "But a rumour has reached me," added Perkins, in a whisper, "an indefinite, perhaps baseless rumour, that Monsieur now ekes out his income as a secret diplomatic agent—in other words, a spy."

May had not been so immersed in her story that she had not caught a word or two of the conversation from the first, and becoming interested in its progress, she had even caught the purport of Cousin Perkins's last guarded utterance.

"I think it is very mean of you," she interposed hotly, "to say such things of my friends. Monsieur D'Antin is no more a spy than you are—perhaps not so much!"

This was hard on Mr. Perkins, who knew himself suspected of having carried information to the Major as to May's movements, a deed of which he was quite innocent. He was really hurt, but scorned to make any reprisals on May, whose brown eyes had flashed fire upon him for a moment. And after all he had rather that she looked at him angrily as now, than indifferently, as was her general wont; as if he were a haystack or a field of cabbages. But the Major put his hand on the other's shoulder deprecatingly.

"She's but a schoolgirl, Harry, and talks like one; you must not mind her."

"Oh, I like her for sticking up for her friends," said Perkins drily. "I only wish she counted me among them. But what about the ball, Blossie"—an old pet name among them—"are you going?"

"What? Tyrrel's ball do you mean?" interposed the Major angrily. "Do you think she would go to the house of her father's enemy—the man who took away his reputation and, I believe, his life?"

"Well, I think you are mistaken there," said Perkins. "As a lawyer, I should say there is no evidence of one or the other. The man's character stands high, his sovereign rewards his successful career with a baronetcy. Major, you should bury the hatchet and offer the olive-branch."

"May I never meet my son in heaven if I do!" said the Major fiercely.

Mr. Perkins might have rejoined that to cherish unforgiving feelings was not the approved way of reaching that desired bourne. But he refrained from any rejoinder, lest he should cause the Major to repeat the story, so long familiar to him, of young Wyvern's fate. But as all the world does not share his knowledge, we may listen for a few moments to the old Knight of Windsor's tale.

The Major's son Hugh was, it may be premised, a great explorer. Not one of those who dash through a continent like a thunderbolt, and hurry home to write a book about it; he devoted his life to his work, taking the business in a leisurely way, and making friends with the people of the country wherever he went. He had married a wife who shared his enterprising spirit, and one little girl had been born to them in the African wilds where they had made their home. It was in a pleasant region of the highlands about the head waters of the Congo, inhabited by a friendly tribe of blacks, who cultivated a fertile and well-watered soil. The climate was genial and healthy; the scenery of park and forest, with a border of snowy peaks; the district abounded with game. The Wyverns thought they had found an earthly paradise, and raising a stockaded camp in a sheltered nook, they remained there several years.

One day Hugh was hunting in the forest when he came upon the track of a slave-hunting party that was making its way through the forest with a string of recently captured negroes. Following at a distance he presently heard piercing cries of terror and distress, and saw a young girl who had

evidently attempted an escape, pursued by a huge brown fellow of the mixed Arab and negro race. Hugh threw himself between them; the Arab drew his long knife, they closed together, and a desperate struggle ensued. The Arab was as lithe and slippery as a serpent, and had already wounded his adversary with a stroke of his knife, and Hugh was fast failing from loss of blood, when the girl, who had watched the combat from a little distance, caught up the gun which Hugh had dropped, and fired it full into the chest of the Arab as he knelt on the body of his now prostrate foe.

There was no time to be lost, and Hugh led the way along secret tracks which he had been shown by the friendly blacks, through the otherwise impenetrable jungle that guarded the frontiers of the happy land. They were not pursued, and the black girl followed submissively to the camp, where she was kindly received by Mrs. Wyvern.

The girl was Zamora, as she was afterwards named, and she devoted herself with grateful affection to the service of the Wyverns, and especially of picanini May.

At that time there was another white man in the camp, a young fellow whom Hugh had picked up on the coast. He had left a wife and child in England, but he proved to be a very dissolute fellow, and discontented as well, and Hugh had often threatened to get rid of him. At last a gross insult he offered to Zamora, put Hugh out of patience; he turned the young fellow out of the camp and bade him begone. He had not intended to be taken at his word, but expected to be offered his submission, and so reinstate him; but the young man, it seemed, was of a harder texture than that came to, and was said to have joined a party of Arab traders, on their way to the coast.

As to what happened subsequently, Zamora was the only witness. It seemed that in some way or other the Arab slave-hunters had ascertained the cause of their comrade's violent death, and had determined on blood revenge. Anyhow, the camp was attacked by surprise, and all its inmates slaughtered, excepting only Zamora and little May, who escaped, as is evident from their present appearance on the scene.

But what had Sir Charles Tyrrel, the respected baronet and millionaire, to do with this story of rash enterprise and its common result? Why, only that in the Major's imagination he was identical with one Tyrrel who returned from the West



Coast of Africa some fifteen years ago, bringing the news of the slaughter of the Wyvern party. According to his account Captain Wyvern had brought the attack on himself by outrages committed on native females, and that account being generally credited certainly checked all sympathy with the victims, and obviated the necessity of any further investigation. Was there nothing else? Why, yes, there was the canvas bag in which May's fortune had been brought home; scrawled upon this as if with a finger dipped in blood—a dark, dull purple now—were the words: "Tyrrel x Traitor." On that red cross Major Wyvern had sworn a solemn oath. He had wept over it too, sad, hopeless tears.

"I am too old and feeble to be an avenger of blood."

#### CHAPTER II. ON BOARD THE "INCONSTANT."

It was very well for an old man to cherish thoughts of vengeance; but quite other sentiments actuated his granddaughter, who was determined to believe the best of her lover and his belongings. She needed no love philtre to blind her to the claims of vengeance; she had never felt any desire to shorten her lover's span of life. From the very first she had looked upon him with delight, and no one had warned her she was treading on forbidden ground.

It had all been the affair of a moment. Each was in a punt, rounding a sharp turn in the river, unconscious of each other's existence, and she at least

In maiden meditation, fancy free.

There was a sudden shock. Two punts had collided, and May would have been thrown into the water but for the dexterity of the other punter—why should gamblers monopolise the epithet!—who caught her, restored her balance, and recovered her pole. She rewarded him with a grateful look; a look may mean anything—but this was such a look!—from deep brown eyes, full and liquid, with long curved lashes that seemed to barb the glance and fix it for ever. To this add the charm of a low, smooth brow crowned with an aureole of gold, or a golden bronze, finely carved nostrils, and parted lips, coral-red, with the gleam of pearls within, and complete the spell with the grace of a lithe and slender yet well-rounded form, and there was a young man's undoing ready made.

"She's the flower of the river," said an

old fisherman to Charles, who lost no time in making his perquisitions, "and I should say she is the flower of the Castle too, for she lives up there, all among the old statuary and monuments."

And so she was; the rose of the cloistery the blossom of the lower ward, the fair living model of all that had charmed in the past within that haunted circle of grey walls and towers. Among the war-worn veterans who, in peaceful retirement, awaited the summons of the last trumpet-call, she appeared as a radiant figure recalling all the sweetness—and with that the sorrow that lingers in hearts still young, though the outward frame may be sere and yellow enough—of earlier, happier days. Some of the veterans remembered her as a child when she first made her appearance, a wild but winning little creature, with the black girl who had saved her from the massacre in which her father and mother had perished, and brought her through innumerable perils to civilised regions. And the pair, although warmly welcomed by Major Wyvern, were yet a source of a good deal of embarrassment. But they did not come quite empty-handed. At the last moment, when escape for the white people was impossible, young Wyvern had entrusted to Zamora a little bag of treasure, diamonds, indeed, of great size and brilliance, which the girl had preserved intact. These were sold and realised sufficient to provide for the education of the two girls; for Zamora utterly refused to be parted from her dear Missie May, and she was received as a boarder in the French school to which May was sent. Here she would learn nothing, but picked up a little broken French to mix with her broken English, her broken Arabic, and an unknown tongue, which she had at first spoken with "Missie May," but which soon became a dead language to that little lassie.

But all this was an old story now, and May's African experiences had faded from her mind, if they had ever made any distinct impression there. The supreme consideration now was the young lover who had appeared upon the scene at the critical moment. How quickly the days had flown since then, and what charming ingenuity Charles had displayed in finding opportunities for their meeting! Flower shows and regattas were neutral zones where these hereditary enemies could meet, and enjoy sweet, half-stolen interviews, and there were festivities sometimes in the

cloisters where May was often a guest, to which Charles would contrive to be invited. And when they had waltzed each other out of breath, they would restore themselves in the sweet air of the secluded terrace, where the town lay sleeping below, and lights twinkled here and there on the river.

But the great piece of good fortune that awaited the young people was the arrival of the D'Antins with their house-boat, for Madame D'Antin, though older than May, had befriended her at school, and was delighted to meet her again. As for Charles, he was an old friend and had known them in Paris. But Julie was not quite so cordial when she discovered the attachment between the pair. She grudged them opportunities of meeting, and altogether had shown herself, in May's opinion, "rather horrid" in the matter.

And on this especial day, although Julie had besought her friend to "fly" to her, in time for luncheon, yet she had added, "I shall be strictly alone, and have things most important to say." And that meant only a scolding and no Charles.

"I will stay at home and be civil to Mr. Perkins," said May to herself.

And then Zamora appeared from the town, her comely face in ebony and ivory lighted up with smiles. She had a basket of beautiful fruit on her arm, and a lovely bunch of flowers. May sprang towards her, for she looked as if she were charged with pleasant news.

"Hush!" said Zamora softly, with a glance towards the Major's grizzled head. "Him come! Him send pretty flowers! Him waiting now, bym-bye, at de ole boat-house."

It was a blissful little voyage that, from the old boat-house; a voyage of discovery with the "Inconstant" as the ultimate goal, but with much to be arrived at in their leisurely progress. Beginning in the toss and turmoil of the wide reach, all glittering and dancing in the sunshine, with boats shooting to and fro, Eton major in racing eights cutting through the water majestically indifferent to the fate of anything in the way, Eton minor bucketing along in any description of tub that would float, tumbling head over heels in eagerness to get along, but getting along all the same. And the Brocas clump appears, reminding one of palms in the desert, so bare are the neighbouring fields; and Athens further on, with a Parthenon of spring-boards and a moving frieze of long-legged Etonians,

hopping continually into the water, with acrobatic flourishes. And from every point of vantage rise gaunt figures in tattered garments who eagerly offer themselves as ready to "tow your honour's" boat for a trifle. And the stream being strong, and the river a trifle dull just here, Charles threw out a line to the nearest hand, and the boat sped merrily along. And it was pleasanter after all to sit under the same sunshade, and talk confidentially in soft accents, than to be half a boat's length apart and communicate ideas in hurried gasps.

But while they were hurried along, as pleased with each other as Antony and Cleopatra in their gilded barge on old Nile, a shout was heard from a boat coming rapidly down the stream: "Why, it's May! Hullo, May! Lend us your gamp, it's so blazing hot!" It was a little ark full of small Eton boys who were enjoying their half-holiday aquatically, and the speaker was Perkins minimus, who was lolling in the stern, and alternately slanging his crew or chaffing other boats with charming vivacity.

"The horrid little wretch!" said May consolately, as the ark disappeared in the distance. "He is sure to give a ridiculous garbled account of meeting us to his uncle Henry."

"And what has his uncle Henry got to do with it?" asked Charles jealously.

"He is my cousin," replied May, "and a kind of guardian. Oh, not a bit grumpy, but very nice and kind; very kind indeed, for he is constantly coming to see my grandfather. Old? Oh, no, hardly middle-aged, and very popular in society, and that makes it all the kinder that he comes to our quiet little cottage to sit with the ancients."

"Very much so," replied Charles drily. "But, May, I should like to come and sit with your grandfather too, if you were there, you know."

"Oh, you must not think of it," said May, in a frightened voice. "He has the most dreadful, unreasonable prejudice against your family."

"It is the Montagus and Capulets over again," said Charles, "but we will make a better ending of it, May darling, will we not?"

May said she did not know, and she spoke truly enough, for out of the comedy of human life how often stalks black Tragedy, sudden and inexorable, to make an end of the show!

But heedless of any probable storms that might be brewing they floated happily on, now lingering in the shade, anchored to the gnarled roots of some spreading tree, or paddling lazily along where the ripples danced in the sunbeams. True to her name the "Inconstant" had left her moorings, and that was an excuse for lingering here and there—but the fragrant odour of cutlets revealed the lurking-place of the house-boat, and May, as she sprang on board at once, laughingly assumed the offensive by accusing Julie of a design to hide herself from her friends.

Other visitors had come on board; and among them Prince Paulovski, a political exile, but also a man devoted to chemical research, and whose hobby was photography. And the latter at the moment was Madame D'Antin's favourite pursuit, and the Prince was delighted to have such an apt and pleasing pupil, to whom he imparted the most recondite secrets of the art. But from the moment of May's arrival her friend could talk of nothing but the ball, and of the costume in which she was to appear. But it must be correct, absolutely correct, in every detail, and where could she get accurate drawings—not simply of the period, her dressmaker had plenty of those—but of the exact costume, such as the beautiful Madame Dubarry may have worn at one of those delightful fêtes at Versailles? Could not May tell her? asked Madame D'Antin impatiently.

"That is not a period young ladies should study moch," said the Prince paternally. But he knew all about it himself. In Dufaçon's splendid work there was an exact representation of the royal concubine and her black page in "costume de bal." There was a copy at the Museum library, and the Prince would gladly make a reproduction of the engraving.

"But that is an affair of days perhaps, and we have only hours!" cried Julie despairingly.

"Not at all, but of a few minutes," cried the Prince. "Behold my process—how simple, how perfect!" He showed how by placing a sheet of his sensitised paper over an engraving, and exposing it for a few moments, he obtained what could be at once developed into a perfect reproduction of the original.

"I shall ask you for a portfolio of your papers, dear Prince," said Madame D'Antin sweetly.

"But it is yours without asking," cried the Prince warmly; "and as for that pretty

coquine and her black boy, you shall have them by this time to-morrow."

"What a charming man!" cried Madame D'Antin, turning to May. "And now we have only to prepare Zamora for her rôle."

"And what is May to be?" asked Charles, a little impatiently.

"Ah, I have her affair," said Madame D'Antin in an impressive manner. "A Béguine—not quite a nun, you know, for she can drop her cross and marry, if she has a chance, and the name is prettier, and I have a sweet costume all ready."

Time had run on so fast that May was frightened to hear the clock strike four, and she realised that she was now due at the Castle, where her grandfather would be impatiently awaiting his cup of tea, and not to be present then would be equivalent to absence without leave. But just at this moment Monsieur D'Antin arrived at the river bank in a fly from Windsor, and May was put into the vehicle and sent off with the Prince and another visitor who had to catch a train. Charles made his way home, where he had been wanted for some time.

#### CHAPTER III. A SECRET MISSION.

LORD CAMUS had arrived at the "Woodlands" to spend a few hours with his sister, Lady Tyrrel. He came with a private secretary, and a few despatch-boxes loaded with papers—and a telegraph operator followed his movements to reinforce the native staff. For Lord Camus was a personage in the diplomatic world. And at once he asked for Charles, and there was hue-and-cry after that young man, till at last he turned up, smiling and unconcerned, while all the rest of the household was in a fume.

"Charles," said Lord Camus abruptly, motioning him to be seated, "you have some knowledge of Arabic, I think."

"Yes, as far as patter goes," replied Charles; "I can talk to the beggars fast enough."

"Good conversational knowledge," murmured Lord Camus, making a note on a sheet of Bath post; "and has experience of African travel."

"As far as a bit of shooting in Barbary goes."

"We want a man of your stamp," continued Lord Camus, looking vacantly at Charles, "to undertake a secret mission of high importance—and of considerable peril."

"There must be something nasty about it," thought Charles, "or they would not

offer it to me." But he meekly requested to be put into possession of further details.

Briefly, the situation was this. There was a certain strip of territory in Africa on which three great Powers cast greedy eyes. With the chief of this country everybody supposed we had a treaty, conferring rights of sovereignty and protection which rendered the country useless to anybody else. But the existing treaty turned out to be a fraud, purporting to be signed by a potentate who had been tomahawked by a successful rival some years before its date. Now the object was to obtain a new and valid treaty from the ruling chief, a very truculent fellow, without anybody being a bit the wiser. It was of vital importance that the flaw in title should not be known till it was remedied. Hence the utmost secrecy must be observed; Charles must depart without beat of drum; no one must even know of his departure; none of his own household; none, however near and dear. The question was such a burning one that all kinds of wiles might be expected on the part of the secret diplomatic agents of other Powers, and he must be ready to start as soon as he received his instructions—within a few days at most.

"Not before Lady Tyrrel's ball, I hope," suggested Charles.

"Ah, the ball!" cried Lord Camus; "that will be a good blind for them. You will show yourself at the ball, and slip away next morning by the Continental day mail. Not a word to a living soul; we don't know who may be on the watch."

At this moment Lord Camus's private secretary put his head in, and said in a low voice:

"Here is Monsieur D'Antin; will you see him?"

"In a few minutes. Now, Charles, don't let that fellow see you here; slip out by the other door. I may count upon you, then?"

"You may," said Charles firmly. "But as there is a fair chance that I may never return, may I not say good-bye to one dear and trusty—friend?"

"Not to a soul!" cried Lord Camus hastily; "your word on that, or I withdraw my offer."

"Very well!" said Charles dolefully. And as he withdrew, he thought: "What will poor May think of me?"

But her trouble would be only for a short time. She would soon have news of him; and when he returned, his mission accomplished, he would be in a fair way of

advancement, and could negotiate with his father and the Major on more even terms—could dispense with their consent, if it came to that. As for failure, he did not mean to fail, and if he were killed, there was an end of the business as far as he was concerned, and May would learn to love somebody else in time.

#### CHAPTER IV. THE FANCY DRESS BALL.

A FINE night made half the success of Lady Tyrrel's fancy ball. For that it was a success was evident enough from the crowds of gay people who were there. Round about the "Woodlands" the roads and lanes were blocked with carriages, frightening the geese on the common and lighting astonished villagers to bed with the glare of their lamps. Here were carriages full of hoops and sacques and diamonds, pretty faces, and powdered hair, for it was understood that the spirit of the eighteenth century should pervade the costume, and there were drags full of gallants in cocked hats, periwigs, or pigtails, with silver-hilted swords, knee-breeches, and silk stockings. The Life Guards appeared as Marlborough's heroes, all but Lieutenant Bob, who by request had assumed the dress of a "darling Abbé" of the period, and who was generally pronounced to be a "love." And a special train brought a crowd of people from London, who found a covered way prepared for them leading through the softly illuminated grounds to the temporary ball-room, which, brilliantly lit by electricity, glowed like a huge comet against the purple vault of night. Over all floated the music of the string band, stirring the pulses for the dance, an invitation to the ball which brought the guests crowding down into the ball-room, to launch themselves gaily on the polished floor.

Everybody admired Madame Dubarry, and the black page was radiant with delight at the attention she received. And the Béguine was at once claimed by a stalwart highwayman, who proved, of course, to be Charles Tyrrel himself. And after one or two turns round the room, Charles suggested the pleasantness of the cool evening air, and they wandered away by a path he knew, to a little knoll where the gay scene was only visible as a lambent glow among the trees. In the distance a stretch of lonely heights jagged with dark pine-groves, showed against the primrose light that on these summer nights keeps



vigil till the dawn. From the heaths and woods between came a soft breath of air, perfumed with heather and wild thyme, and spiced with aromatic odours from the pine-woods.

"You will be true to me, May," whispered Charles, as his arm stole round her waist unrepulsed; "you will be true to me even if appearances should be against me? You will trust me in everything?"

"I will trust you," replied May, leaning her head softly against his shoulder, "in everything, if you are true to me. But don't leave me to myself. I can bear anything if I have you to talk to and tell about it, but it is hard to go against the wishes of my dear old grandfather."

"But he can't really hate me," said Charles; "we shall persuade him in time."

May shook her head.

"And then," she continued, "he is so anxious about me, and he likes Harry Perkins so much, and he sighs and says how happy I should be with him, and how safe!"

"Meaning that you should marry him," cried Charles jealously; "but, May, you never would——"

"And I think," continued May gravely, "that I should have come to like him in time, for he is very kind and good—if it hadn't been for you, Charlie."

He felt a delicious reproach in her words as he folded her in his arms—a moment of bliss too brief, for a shadow fell upon them, and they started apart.

Meantime Madame Dubarry, beguiled by the music, had tucked her train over her arm, and danced off with a dashing Life-guardsmen, and the page, whose polished ebony face and flashing eyes had shown off so effectively the fair charms of his mistress, finding his occupation gone, strolled away very well satisfied with his release, and began to explore the surroundings of the scene. He tasted the ices, regaled himself with coffee, filled his pockets with cakes, made fun with the female servants, who called him a wicked boy, made faces at the solemn men-servants—in fact, acted up to the character of a mischievous page with great address. But at heart it was still Zamora, the devoted slave of her darling May.

"Much splendid house," she said to herself, as she marked all the evidences of wealth and social position, "much fine servants, grand carriages, lovely horses, all, all for my dear Missie May."

When she had explored the public

rooms, she fearlessly launched herself on a voyage of discovery in the other regions of the house. She admired the bedrooms, their delicate hangings and appointments; she fixed on the biggest and handsomest. "Dis for my Missie May."

In the course of her investigations, she came upon a scene that interested her amazingly. The room was evidently the special sanctum of the master of the house, plainly furnished with a well-filled book case, a few good pictures, a writing-table, and some comfortable roomy chairs. At the table on opposite sides sat two men steadfastly playing cards; the game was Poker, and they scored with a piece of chalk on the morocco-covered table. Zamora watched the scene intently, her eyes dilating, and a red light showing in their pupils. The players were too intent on their game to notice her stealthy movements. One of the men was D'Antin, the other must be Sir Charles Tyrrel. Him, Zamora had never seen before—and yet there was something about the men and the scene that recalled something similar and yet with widely different surroundings in the distant past: the splendid mansion exchanged for a wattled hut, the soft strains of music for the howling of wild beasts, the gay company for a string of miserable, half-starved slaves.

The game was finished.

"That makes five hundred," said D'Antin carelessly.

Sir Charles nodded morosely.

"I'll give you notes if you don't mind," and he rose to unlock his safe. Then his eyes fell upon Zamora, and the colour left his face, and he trembled visibly. D'Antin turned in the same direction and laughed.

"Come forth, Zamora!" he cried, and the black girl stepped forward.

"Mass'r D'Antin," she cried significantly, "de ladies are looking for you; you go and dance wid everybody."

D'Antin laughed, but moved away.

"I'll give you your revenge later on," he said, waving his hand towards Sir Charles.

The latter had now recovered his composure in some measure, but he kept his eyes still fixed on Zamora.

The black girl nonchalantly took the seat vacated by D'Antin, and returned the glance with one full of calm ferocity.

"Well," said Sir Charles at last, his eye sinking under the fire of hers, "what do you want?"

"Everything," replied Zamora, with a comprehensive gesture. "Houses, lands,

moneys, everything; not for me, but for my Missie May. Your son first of all, and he must bring the rest—everything, do you hear?—for my Missie May."

"Absurd!" cried Sir Charles, his courage roused at last. "What! do you mean that my son is to marry the girl? Let him if he likes, and take his bride to the work-house, a set of paupers together; and you, get you out of the place!"

Zamora laughed bitterly as she passed out of the room.

"Well, if you will not listen to me, Obi shall come and talk to you."

Sir Charles fell back in his chair, and a yellow hue spread over his face. He knew the full significance of the threat; he had seen the working of the charm, the gradual drying up of the sources of life in its victim, the paralysis of age crawling over the form, however robust, the sinews shrivelling, the muscles relaxing, and existence extinguished in a kind of dry-rot. But that was in the wilds of Africa. Here surely, with all the resources of civilisation about him, a telephone at his hand connected with all the centres of intelligence, with police, detectives, analytic chemists, and all-wise specialists at his call, here surely he could defy the wiles of the African demon?

"Obi may go hang!" he cried valiantly, but he felt a chill at the heart all the same.

Having succeeded in frightening Sir Charles to her heart's content, Zamora now thought it was time to look after her young mistress. Guessing that the lovers would take the opportunity to wander away alone, she soon traced them to their trysting-place and witnessed their embrace. "That is very good," she cried, putting her black face between them, "but there is one thing shall be done before you shall kiss any more." She drew from her pocket a morsel of polished shell, and taking May by the hand she made a little incision on her wrist, from which welled a drop of crimson blood. She repeated the same process with Charles, and with the broad end of the shell she rubbed upon each a minute portion of the other's crimson ichor. "Bone and flesh, say your holy books," cried Zamora, "but blood is better than all. Now whichever shall break faith, let the creature wither away and be consumed—even as this is consumed." She set alight as she spoke a handful of some vegetable fibre, that flamed for a moment and then left the scene in deeper darkness.

"Hullo!" said a voice close at hand.

"Have the fireworks commenced already?" It was Monsieur D'Antin alone, and placidly smoking a cigar the perfume of which pleasantly floated in the night air. "Ah, Mr. Charles," he cried, "there is weeping among deserted damsels down below.—Pardon, Mademoiselle, I did not perceive you for the moment—but for you also seeks a rosy-cheeked little Abbé who bewails a vanished partner. Zamora," he continued, as the others went off together towards the ball-room, "remain with me for a moment and tell me a story about thy native land."

#### CHAPTER V. STOPPED ON THE HIGHWAY.

It was late when Zamora returned to the ball-room, and she found a cotillon in progress. May seemed to be in full enjoyment, and oblivious of time with first one partner, and then another, although her favourite cavaliers were the dashing highwayman, and the rosy-gilled Abbé. But Madame Dubarry was in her glory; the whole brigade of Guards were metaphorically at her feet, and she felt that she was avenging Blenheim and Waterloo.

The figure now in progress was adapted to the display of Madame's coquettish charms. She sat in a chair, her pretty feet in their high-heeled rosetted shoes showing like Cinderella's beneath her satin petticoat. In her hand was a looking-glass, and behind her pressed a cluster of men, who one by one presented their faces to the mirror with the most beseeching expression they could assume. But she wiped them away one after the other with her laced handkerchief. "And I can only choose one!" she cried pityingly. "Quel dommage!" Then Zamora popped up his black face, and the Dubarry screamed and dropped the mirror, which was shattered in the fall. "What a misfortune!" she cried, "what a terrible presage! No, I have no heart to dance any more. Gentlemen, you must excuse me. Zamora, maladroît page, seek my carriage. Sister Marie, I attend your pleasure."

It was hard for May to be snatched away in the midst of her enjoyment, but after all they had stayed too long already. But just then Monsieur D'Antin appeared with disconcerting news. The "Inconstant," to which the party were to have returned that night, had broken away from her moorings and drifted down the stream, and where she was hiding herself, only daylight could show. As for himself and

Madame, they might get places on one of the drags going to town, and return to their rooms at the "Métropole." But delighted as he would be to take charge of Mademoiselle—would it be prudent on her part?

"Oh, no!" cried May, overwhelmed with dismay, for as they had all dressed on board the "Inconstant," their everyday costumes were all adrift on the river. It was equally dreadful to think of masquerading thus in broad daylight in the streets of London, or of arousing the quiet precincts of the Castle in such a guise. "It is a judgement upon me," she cried, "for deceiving my poor grandfather," and tears began to fall on the nun's black robe.

"It is all the fault of that terrible looking-glass," cried Julie.

Zamora drew herself up beside her mistress and looked angrily round.

"It will be bad for who make my missie cry," she said with vehemence.

But Charles was at hand, and came with words of comfort. He had already ordered a dog-cart to be ready, and in twenty minutes he would put them down, May and Zamora, at the Castle gate. There was nothing else for it, and away they went. At other times the drive would have been delightful through the crisp night air, but to May it all passed like a bad dream. The postern was closed, of course, and they had to knock and knock, and when they gained admittance the sentry challenged, and almost dropped his firelock, startled by the appearance of what he took to be the traditional nun who walked the cloisters, accompanied by some spirit, certainly not of the blest. And just then the officer of the guard was coming round accompanied by a lanthorn, and happily he understood the situation in a moment. He grinned, and saluted.

"Had a pleasant evening, I hope; wish I'd been there! Good night, or rather morning."

May was safe in her own room, but bitterly she thought of the morrow: how her name would be discussed among the preux chevaliers of the old brigade, to whom she had been hitherto as the white flower of innocence and truth; and how malicious stories would circulate, and the dames of the cloister would look coldly upon her, and there would be no compensation for all this.

As for Charles himself, who had no notion of what May would have to suffer on his account, he drove homewards gaily enough.

The adventurous expedition on which he was about to start now fully occupied his mind. He had received his instructions, some of which were sealed and not to be opened till he reached a certain latitude; that was to prevent his blabbing on the way. And he had been again especially cautioned to depart without fuss or leave-taking as an ordinary traveller, bound on some sporting expedition.

The way was lonely enough; some while between dark pine-woods, to enter which was like descending into a tomb; and again the road ran across an open heath where a dark fir-crowned knoll, that rose above the sky-line, was still known as Gibbet Hill, and was avoided at night by credulous peasants. And just at this point it was startling enough when a figure, armed and masked and mounted on a coal-black steed, suddenly barred his way. The horse that Charles was driving reared and swerved, sending the near wheel into the ditch and its driver spinning into the air.

He came down with a thud that knocked the senses out of him for awhile. When he came to himself he was lying among the heather, and his horse was quietly cropping the grass not far away. The cart had not been overturned, it seemed, and Charles, rising with a little difficulty, found that he was let off for a shaking. His watch was safe, his purse also, and Charles came to the conclusion that some one of the masqueraders from the ball had played a practical joke upon him. It was shabby of the joker to leave his victim to his fate; but perhaps he had been frightened at the result of the pleasantry.

Resuming the reins and his seat, Charles drove quietly home. He was a little dazed with his tumble, and at once retired to rest. When he awoke morning was well advanced, and he found he had not much time to spare to catch the day express for Dover. Then he remembered his official papers which he had carried carefully about with him since he had received them, but in the confusion of his tumble he had forgotten all about them, and now he could not find them anywhere.

"Here am I, a disgraceful failure at the very start," said Charles wildly to himself. There was one chance; his pocket-book might have dropped when he fell. Charles called for a horse and galloped over to the spot. The track where the dog-cart had left the road was still plainly to be seen; and there, snugly lying under a tuft of heather, was the missing portfolio. Charles raised

it to his lips in gratitude for such an escape, and then his eyes clouded over in doubt, for, mingled with the scent of Russia leather, was a slight perfume of chemicals. Could the papers have been tampered with? No, that was almost impossible. Probably the paper used was chemically prepared for hot climates. That was a highly satisfactory explanation, and Charles an hour later was on his way to Dover, having just nicked the train at Charing Cross.

#### CHAPTER VI. THE ADVENTURER AT HOME.

It was high noon in the Champs Elysées, and the world seemed to have grown a little drowsy in the summer heat. People dozed on the benches under the trees; there was a fragrance of bouillon from the newspaper kiosk where the lady in charge was taking her refreshment; carriages rolled lazily along at fitful intervals, and the innumerable sounds which are the audible breath of a great city were hushed, as it were, in a gentle slumber. Only those people whose "déjeuners" were yet to come showed signs of life; those who had eaten theirs, and a numerous class who had no hopes in that direction, shared alike the lethargic spirit of the hour.

In a charmingly decorated salle in one of the handsomest mansions of this pleasant quarter, Monsieur and Madame D'Antin were seated at breakfast tête-à-tête. Everything in the service and appointments of the meal showed the presence of wealth and good taste; the master of the house was in his usual placid good spirits, and seemed blessed with an excellent appetite; Madame, on the other hand, appeared a little troubled and out of temper. She only trifled with her food, and presently called for tea, which was brought her, and of the strongest, by the "femme de chambre."

"Reckless Julie!" said D'Antin in a tone of raillery. "To eat nothing and to drink strong tea. Have pity on that charming complexion."

"But I have slept badly," cried Julie, "and I have been tormented with bad dreams—ah, if I had only Zamora to interpret them for me! And also I have a letter this morning from that poor May—it is evident that she is suffering—and she asks me so innocently, 'Is it possible that you have seen anything of Monsieur Charles in Paris?' Might I not send her one little word to tell her where he is?"

"A thousand times, no!" cried D'Antin. "What! after having managed everything

so neatly to betray ourselves by such a bêtise? Besides, I consider that young man as écrasé."

"But no harm will happen to him!" cried Madame D'Antin anxiously.

"Only a few months' detention," said D'Antin carelessly. "But let us concern ourselves no more about him. We will find a better match for your charming friend. There is the Prince, now! He seemed to admire her."

"Yes, and he enquired earnestly about her dot. But what could he do—poor and proscribed, and such a firebrand?"

"But with a good fortune, don't you think that would tempt him?—he is tired of politics—and a lovely wife."

"Ah, with a fortune—but whence to come? From the poor Knight her grandfather, who puts shillings in a child's money-box—and it is to pay for his funerals, the poor man!"

"All that might be arranged," said D'Antin lightly, as he lit a cigarette. "Conceive, now, that when we leave Paris we visit our château in Normandy. It is a tumbledown old place, but I have ordered a few rooms to be made habitable. Mademoiselle joins us with Zamora. What danger would there be for the Prince? My servants are devoted to me, the neighbourhood is as innocent of politics as a convent of nuns. He assumes a false name and pays us a visit—poor man, after being shut up so long in that sacré little island he will breathe freely once more."

Madame D'Antin regarded her husband with an expression of some mistrust, mingled with the admiration with which he inspired her.

"And how," she asked, "do you propose to supply the deficiency in the young lady's fortune?"

"By putting a little legitimate pressure upon Sir Charles Tyrrel," replied D'Antin. "He did her father a great injury, and owes her some reparation. Not that he would acknowledge the debt, but the poor man has been terrified with the vague threats of your friend Zamora. He is timid and superstitious, and believes the poor thing to be a sorceress. He has written to me that he will call upon me, and no doubt he seeks some arrangement."

Just then a servant announced that Sir Charles Tyrrel, passing through, and pressed for time, particularly desired to see Monsieur.

"Quite à propos," said D'Antin, smiling. "We will see him, of course."



Sir Charles entered, looking anxious and careworn. His anxiety was about himself, it seemed, for as soon as preliminary greetings were over, he asked nervously :

"How do you think I am looking?"

"Oh, my friend," said D'Antin, laughing, "it is easy to see. Too many fancy balls, too much poker."

"I assure you," cried Sir Charles nervously, "I have not touched a card since I saw you. By the way, we haven't settled yet," and he began to fumble for his pocket-book.

"Oh, that when you take your revenge," said D'Antin carelessly. "And when shall that be—now? I had intended the races at Auteuil, but I will ruin myself with you instead."

"No, not at this moment, and in Madame D'Antin's charming society."

"But I have duties, too," said Madame D'Antin, smiling politely, but rising in obedience to a signal from her husband.

When the two were alone, Sir Charles's embarrassment increased.

"I haven't felt right," he stammered, "since that night when the black girl threatened me. It gave me such a turn, too—to be recognised after all these years. Didn't you feel it, D'Antin?"

"Well, no," said D'Antin. "I hadn't such an interest in the matter. All the world may know my share of the business. I didn't betray anybody."

"No! but you shared the plunder," said Sir Charles sneeringly.

"That was only fair," replied D'Antin with calmness. "Of what use to you would have been all that store of ivory without porters to carry it to the coast? But do you remember how you won the whole from me at poker the very next night? It was in the forest. I think I now can hear the roar of the wind among the tree-tops. The lantern flickered dimly. I looked up, and just over you I saw the features of a black girl; one hand clutched the matting of the hut, the other a knife. I sprang to my feet instinctively, and she vanished. That was an unlucky spring for me. Another moment, and I should have cleared the board; for, look you, I should have made myself your executor and sole legatee."

"You never told me, you never warned me," gasped Sir Charles.

"Why should I?" asked D'Antin contemptuously. "We were never comrades, only accomplices. But now you are rich; you turned your spoil to more advantage

than I could have done. Why do not you purchase your safety? Accept the black girl's terms. Marry your son to the Wylvian girl, and settle a handsome fortune upon them."

"Never!" cried Sir Charles. "What! meet that girl at every turn, and feel every look she gives me as a reproach? And her eyes are like her mother's," added the baronet in an agitated whisper; "and I should never escape from them. And the girl is his daughter—the man whose very name I hate and loathe."

"All which does not concern me much," said D'Antin, as if tired of the subject. "Well, if you won't play poker, shall I drive you to Auteuil?"

Sir Charles declined, but arranged to meet D'Antin after dinner on the boulevard, where they were to finish their match at poker. Sir Charles was a prudent gamester, and he mistrusted the cards he might find at his friend's house or his club, lest they should have been previously marked; but in a café, taken haphazard, there was little risk of that kind of trickery.

D'Antin drove down to the racecourse in a well-appointed English-built mail phaeton, drawn by a pair of well-matched bays. It was a gay little meeting, the stands were fluttering with charming costumes, the lawns were covered with groups of distinguished people; music sounded softly, and over all rose the hoarse voice of the British bookmaker making his usual offers to "bar one." D'Antin moved among the throng, exchanging recognitions on every side, a popular oracle with the gilded youth, an amusing "flâneur" among the ladies. With it all there were eyes that followed his movements—eager eyes from the crowd, gleaming eyes that glowed under shocks of crisp curls, in faces white and thin. "Is it he?" was whispered in the crowd, while another said, "Not yet, it is not certain."

But D'Antin troubled himself little about what passed in the crowd; he was fully taken up with his bets, and with the horses and their owners, and with one or two pretty women who looked up to him as their guide and mentor in the affairs of the turf. His judgement was good, his luck was in the ascendant, he won a little for his fair friends and a good deal for himself; and then, with his fascinating associates, reinforced by some other smart people, he dined gaily at a fashionable restaurant, and parting with his friends, sallied forth on the boulevard, hoping to follow his vein and win a few thousands from the rich baronet.

In this, however, he was not successful. Sir Charles, who was as keen and wily as himself, favoured by chance, won back all he had lost and a few hundreds more. That he had won the match seemed to give more pleasure to Sir Charles than the gain of the money. Still, it was pleasant to see with what nonchalance D'Antin paid over his losses. Sir Charles began to feel more confidence in his friend; and after all, if he chose, D'Antin could save him from the fear that now followed him like his shadow. His influence over Zamora was undoubted, but would he exert it on behalf of Sir Charles?

"Why should I?" asked D'Antin cynically. "If the girl is a sorceress, as you say, and can remove people silently from her path, she will be a very useful kind of friend. I doubt her powers myself, and in your case shall watch the experiment with interest."

Sir Charles shuddered at the cold-blooded way in which the other spoke.

"But if I pay handsomely for safety?" he asked.

Then D'Antin unfolded his plan: "With Miss Wyvern handsomely married, and Zamora thus propitiated, all danger would cease; but to marry her handsomely she must have a handsome fortune, and that Sir Charles must provide. Twenty-five thousand pounds, not a penny less! And consider it," said D'Antin, "as an act of expiation."

Sir Charles pondered over the matter as he sat under the awning on the gay boulevard, while on his ears fell unheeded the light chatter all around, the rattle of cups and glasses, the voices of the waiters poising their loaded trays, the cries of the newspaper sellers, mingled with the clatter of vehicles. All passed before him like a dream; the constant procession of strange faces momentarily passing into the glare and lost again in the shadows under the trees, the pulsation of the crowd that followed some strange law in its very irregularities. D'Antin watched him with a certain amusement in his eyes—perhaps he was watched himself by eyes insensible to humour—he marked the contest of emotion in the mind of the hard-headed man of money, and laughed outright.

"To another time," he cried, hailing a passing voiture as he sprang to his feet.

"Stay!" cried Sir Charles, "I consent! We will settle the matter now."

After a few words of negotiation the pair hurried across to the great dimly-lighted

hall, where the "Petite Bourse" was in full swing, and where crowds of people of all conditions of life were eagerly crying out prices and names of stock, the whole place like an anthill for incessant and seemingly purposeless movement. And here Sir Charles quickly got hold of a broker he knew, and arranged for the purchase of bonds to the value of twenty-five thousand pounds, to be held by D'Antin as trustee, but registered in Sir Charles's name. At the same time Sir Charles signed an undertaking to transfer the whole of the stock to May Wyvern on her marriage.

When D'Antin arrived at home, he found his wife sitting up for him half asleep on the sofa, and very much dissatisfied with the dull evening she had spent without his society. D'Antin gaily flourished in the air a large sealed envelope.

"See, I have secured your friend's happiness. Here is the fortune which will enable her to marry her friend the Prince. Who is the sorcerer now?"

"Ah!" cried Julie, throwing her arms about his neck, "when you are amiable like this you are divine."

#### CHAPTER VII. AN INVITATION TO NORMANDY.

ALTHOUGH May's forebodings were not altogether falsified by the event, and some gossiping stories as to the fancy ball went round among her friends, causing some of the more serious-minded to look coldly upon her, yet these things would not have troubled her much but for her grandfather's gloom and sadness. He did not reproach her—he seemed only to reproach himself. "I am not able to guide the footsteps of one growing up to womanhood," he said to himself. And he could no longer trust Zamora, for she had shown herself as wild and headstrong as his granddaughter. And as Perkins told him, he ought to put May under some good, rigid kind of woman—Perkins had an aunt who answered to the description—and separate her from Zamora, who might be provided with some other situation. But when it came to the point, the old warrior had not the courage to break the plan to his woman-kind. He had mounted the breach at Mooltan, the first of the storming party, but that was nothing to facing the tears and indignation of two young women.

But May's most serious trouble was the strange silence of her lover. He had parted from her with a world of tenderness, and yet from that moment it seemed as if

he had forgotten her very existence. His canoe was no longer moored under the willows,

Nor up the lawn nor in the wood was he.

Yet after all that had passed, it was due to her that he should make some open attempt to win her, and to leave her thus, as it were in suspense, seemed not only cruel but insulting. Yet she would forgive him all if he would only come back to her.

Soon there came news that the "Woodlands" was shut up. Sir Charles had gone one way, his fashionable wife another; and as for young Charles, he might be with one or the other, or more probably with neither, and enjoying himself in his own way. The D'Antins, too, had gone. They had returned no more to the "Inconstant," which had damaged herself against the weir in her ill-timed nocturnal wanderings, and was now in the boat-builders' hands.

And thus with neither love nor friendship to console her, it was dead low water with poor May. The salt, swift tide had come and gone, bringing its strange sea life into the quiet pools, and there leaving it to flounder as it might. And yet outwardly things went on as they did before the flood. The clock from the old curfew tower struck the hours, wafts of music marked the services in the grand old chapel of the Knights of St. George—the organ rolled, the shrill choir-boys chanted their loudest. Workmen passed to and fro, whistling and joking, unsubdued by the solemnity of surroundings. And an intermittent procession of sightseers came and stared and went their way. Sometimes the crisp clatter of cavalry would come from the street below, and the faint sounds of cheering, and there was always a kind of military stir about the place, what with bugle-calls, and guard mounting, and the tramp of scarlet warriors in tall bearskins. There was the rattle of steel scabbards on the hundred steps, and the clink of spurs in the cloisters, and soldiers in undress hung over the battlements, and exchanged greetings with comrades or sweethearts in distant parts of the town. When the broad banner of St. George floated from the huge round tower high above, all the stir and life about the place seemed suddenly intensified, and the gossip of the old Knights was of people distinguished in the great world who were coming or going—of who was in; waiting, and when would be the next great function. But when the flag was hauled down this morning excitement was over, and pipes

and the "Morning Post" resumed the ascendant. What a charm there had been about the place to the young girl when she had first spent her holidays there with her grandfather, and what a pleasant spot it had seemed when, school days over, she had come to live there altogether! But now she wearied of it all. "He cometh not," she said like her of the moated grange, and walls and turrets only reminded her of a prison.

And then one morning the postman brought her a letter with the familiar blue French stamp, and the sun shone once more "o'er life's dull stream." Her friend Julie anyhow had not proved faithless, and as she read on, the colour came to her cheeks, the light to her eyes. An invitation for a month at the Château D'Antin was good, but better still was the expectation excited by the lines, written on a separate slip: "For your eyes only. We shall probably have among our guests one for whom I think you have some esteem, but who has, I fancy, even warmer sentiments in his heart which obstacles now removed have prevented him from declaring." Now, this could mean no other than Charles, thought May, with happy confidence. Now all would be explained, and she might put back her lover in the niche which had been so wofully empty without him.

The old Knight hardly recognised May's footstep as she marched lightly in and placed her letter before him. Carefully adjusting his spectacles, he looked it over.

"And you wish to go?" he asked, looking gravely up at her over his glasses.

"If I wish to go!" she exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "And Zamora, too; you see she is also invited; and she worships Julie!"

On the whole the Major was glad of the proposed visit. It relieved him of the necessity of coming to a decision as to his future course. It was just possible that Madame D'Antin might wish to retain Zamora, and she to remain in her service. And that would be a solution of one part of the question.

In the course of the day the rattle of a bicycle bell announced the approach of another visitor. This was the Prince, with a "Kodak" slung round him on one side, while on the other was a wallet for botanical specimens. With his dark waving hair, high forehead, and soft, melancholy eyes, he was one of the mildest-mannered men who ever won the reputation of a firebrand. An ill-regulated desire to pro

mote the happiness of his fellow-creatures had reduced him to a condition of almost indigence. From wealth he had descended to penury as gaily as one takes a walk through a garden of roses. But with it all he was always pre-eminently a gentleman, and even in spite of himself, very much of the grand seigneur.

To the Major he was only known from his political reputation, which did not greatly recommend him to the old soldier; but the latter speedily recognised the genuine qualities of his guest, and the two soon came to be on excellent terms. The Prince had come to pay his respects to the Major, and to enquire after the young lady whom he had met in the company of her charming friend, Madame D'Antin. Also he came to offer his services in the capacity of honorary courier, if Mademoiselle had determined, as Madame D'Antin had suggested, to pay a visit to Normandy. He would not offer to be her personal escort, as the Prince observed with a melancholy smile that his visits to the Continent were not exempt from a kind of risk which would render him an undesirable travelling companion.

"Then why go, sir?" asked the Major earnestly. "To risk your life when duty calls, or under the orders of a superior officer, is one thing; but a useless risk is one that a brave man should abstain from."

"Exactly," said the Prince, "when duty calls; but one may not always recognise her voice; but superior orders—yes, when one has once enlisted in a service there is nothing for it but unquestioning obedience."

"You are right, sir," said the Major. "That has always been my principle; but it doesn't suit the young people."

May had entered at the moment, and the Prince rose to receive her, and gracefully bowed over the hand she extended to him.

"Ah, these tyrants of the hearth!" said the Prince. "They impose their commands instead of receiving them."

He detained her hand for a moment, looking at her the while with an expression in which was expressed such a kindly interest and sweetness of regard, mingled with something that was almost like entreaty, or perhaps warning, that May was interested in spite of herself.

"You are quite sure," asked the Prince softly, "that you are prudent in undertaking this journey with no other protection than your *femme de chambre*? Would it not be better to wait till some escort can

be obtained other than myself, who can only watch from a distance?"

"Oh, I do not fear the voyage," said May, smiling, "and I shall be met on the other side."

"Yes, on the other side," repeated the Prince dreamily. "But one is not always safe on the other side. I am not, anyhow," he added, rousing himself and smiling cheerfully.

"You don't see any danger in this visit for May?" cried the Major, puzzled by something in his guest's manner.

May looked imploringly at the Prince. He understood her great desire for the journey.

"I know of no danger," he said, smiling—and indeed he spoke the truth. But he did not mention that he had found nailed to his desk that morning in his humble lodgings in Soho, a scrap of paper on which was written: "If invited, go. Orders await you there." And this was the man whom D'Antin thought to attract with an imaginary dower.

#### CHAPTER VIII. AT THE OLD CHATEAU.

THE departure of May and Zamora for the Continent, though not an important event for those inured to the coming and going of the great, still caused some excitement among those immediately concerned. Mr. Perkins had come down purposely to see them off and to put them into the Continental train at Charing Cross. And his nephew, the coxswain of the "Ark," was at the station with one or two of his schoolfellows, "just to cheer them up a bit." And with this laudable intention they purchased a copy of every comic paper published, and threw them into the carriage just before starting, which comic numbers flying all over the seats, gave the other occupants an unfavourable opinion of the "frivolity" of their fellow passengers. Lieutenant Bob had also found his way to the station, and apologetically offered a bouquet of hothouse flowers, "just for the journey, you know," and was rewarded by a smile of thanks that sent a glow through his whole frame. The Major was there of course, looking a little anxious, and with him Captain Capricorn, R.N., who, though he dwelt, as a Naval Knight, outside the Castle ward, was interested in all its young people, and had brought a little gilt-edged book, which he pressed into May's hand as he whispered, "An antidote against Continental frivolities."



May's joyous feelings were not long damped by her regrets at parting from so many friendly faces. And Zamora, who regretted nobody but a certain piper of the Scots Guards, whose music recalled the primitive instrumentation of the performers of her native land, Zamora was wild with delight at the prospect of new scenes and new faces. And with the charming instinct common to her race of telling people just what they want to hear, she whispered confidently to May: "Some thing tell me, missie, we coming nearer and nearer him you want to see." And May had the same impression. "I am sure I should not feel so glad," she said to herself, "if he were out of sympathy with me." The mystic rite performed by Zamora seemed to have established a subtle link between them. It does not require a cartload of ceremony to establish a spiritual connection between souls that have affinity. And so strong was the indefinite impression that influenced May that she half expected to see Master Charles walking the deck of the smart steamboat that was whistling impatiently for the train, and hurrying people along with its signals of departure. Needless to say, he was not there.

And again, when they reached Boulogne, among the crowds of people in airy summer costumes, the blue blouses and the bare-legged fishergirls, she looked in vain for the one face that would have made the whole scene to her as gay and "riant" as it was in fact. And with this disappointment the day seemed to cloud over, and rolling along over the marshy flats and grey, dull, sandy wastes, the train as it rounded the frequent curves and roared over low girder bridges appeared like a convoy of funeral cars on its way to some fête of the catacombs. And at Amiens it seemed to have reached its destination.

Whether it was the darkness of a coming storm or the humid vapours of a manufacturing city that hung over the dark and dirty expanse of iron and glass, anyhow, the station of Amiens seemed to have turned day into night. The black girders, the blacker vans, festooned with wreaths of steam that showed a dusky bronze in the jaundiced light; the hollow, echoing noises that were heard in the semi-darkness, the clank of hammer and axle, the rolling of loaded vans striking against each other with sharp angry shocks, the monotonous chant of porters announcing the departure and destination of trains with the solemnity of a liturgy; sights and sounds all com-

bined, gave the travellers an impression of weird and solemn gloom. Zamora shivered and trembled as she stood on the draughty platform clutching a bundle of wraps and staring wildly about her. Some countrywomen in white caps and short petticoats who were travelling to market regarded her with unfeigned admiration.

"It is an American," said one. "They are all of that colour."

"But no," cried her companion. "I have seen some that are almost as white as we others."

But May heard no more of the conversation, for just then there rolled into the station a heavy black train, that drew up by the platform with much clanking and clashing. There was no opening of doors or rush of passengers—indeed, there were no doors to open, as each of the black, iron-bound vans showed only one tiny grated window just under its heavily-clamped roof. And each van bore an inscription, neatly lettered on its side, "The Director of Public Prisons."

May looked at the dismal train with curiosity mixed with feelings of compassion. What kind of creatures were these, who were guarded with more precautions than a cageful of tigers, and transferred from place to place in jealous seclusion? But Zamora clasped her by the arm in great excitement, and pointed upwards to the grating of one of the prison vans. There a hand was visible, a sun-browned and well-formed masculine hand, loosely grasping the iron grating as if seeking the light and air and liberty denied to the owner. To people accustomed to study hands, they can be as easily recognised as faces. And though untaught in palmistry, Zamora possessed a faculty of keen observation in trifling matters.

"Look, missie," she cried, "there your lubia. See the mark that I made?"

And there sure enough on the wrist, whiter than the hand above it, was to be seen a tiny red cross, the mark of the incision that Zamora had made on the night of the ball.

"Oh, is it Charles?" cried May, stretching up to the hand and embracing it with her fingers.

The hand grasped hers with firm, ecstatic pressure. A voice was heard from the cavernous depths of the prison van, but what it said could not be distinguished, for the hand was sharply plucked back, while the sharp tinkle of a bell gave an alarm of some kind to the warders of the prison train.

And next moment May and her companion were surrounded by a little crowd of officials, gesticulating and angrily denouncing poor May's instinctive act as a serious contravention of such an article of the Code; and in a few moments a brigadier of gendarmes in a fierce cocked hat, his breast hung with "galons" and decorated with medals, was drawing up a "procès verbal" with all the alacrity in the world. And with the indignation of the prison officials was evidently mingled some apprehension on their own account, for May distinguished the words "mis au secret," which implied that the prisoner, like the "Man with the Iron Mask," was debarred from any intercourse with the outer world. Zamora, half frightened, half indignant, endeavoured to break through the throng and open a way for her mistress, but half-a-dozen hands thrust her back, and she was told to consider herself in the custody of the law.

But in the midst of the imbroglío, some one interfered on the part of the accused. A man in a flat cap and rough travelling suit accosted the brigadier, and demanded a few words with him. The gendarme's brow relaxed as the stranger spoke in a low aside. He nodded comprehendingly, and pressed the other's hand as he concluded.

"Ah, if it is an affair of the heart!" he whispered; and then addressing the group of officials:

"Gentlemen," he said, "explanations have been given me which reduce the importance of this incident to a mere act of benevolence on the part of a young and feeling heart, which may well pass without further notice."

There was a general chorus of assent as the brigadier tore up the half-finished procès and scattered its fragments on the platform. The warders sprang to their posts, a whistle sounded, and the convoy of "black Marias" trundled noisily onwards, and was lost to sight in fume and darkness.

The brigadier politely escorted the two young women, a good deal agitated by their recent experience, to their particular train, which was waiting in a siding till the Paris express passed out. But where was the man who had interposed so effectually, and whom May desired to thank for his good offices? He was no longer to be seen, but she fancied from the glimpse she had obtained of his features he was none other than the Prince. Was it possible that he could solve the mystery attending her lover? Was it really Charles whose hand she had clasped just

now? Zamora had no doubt as to that. Had she not foretold that he was approaching. And now, although they were separated for awhile, there would soon be a happy reunion. In this Zamora spoke rather as a friend than a prophetess, for, in secret, she no longer felt very confident about the matter. Her fetish had deceived her once, keeping its promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope; and Zamora, in her anger, was inclined to throw it out of the window.

The train which was for Rouen did not hurry along at demon speed. There was plenty of time to admire the scenery on the way, and that, when they reached the Pays de Bray — the great dairy farm of the country — was pleasant enough. Little valleys, sparkling streams, meadows everywhere, cows tethered in platoons, the scent of milk-pails in the air. It is a country to itself, shut in with chalky cliffs and ridges of far-stretching downs, easily overlooked by a traveller in a hurry, but which has its own quiet, peaceful charm. Then the train reaches the high chalk plateau, where now the harvest was everywhere cleared, and the wide fields lay bare, lines of poplars marking out the roads, and tufted groups of elms the scattered farmsteads. Queer wheeled ploughs were at work in the fields, and teams of strong, powerful horses, that neighed a greeting of defiance to their noisy iron brother; but elsewhere silence and the sadness of autumn seemed to brood over the country with the haze that crept slowly over the undulating plain.

It was almost night, and the afterglow of sunset was lighting up the wooded scarps of the hills, when Rouen was seen for a moment, the queen of many valleys, with her spires and towers rising from the mass of roofs, all grey and faded red; and the river all pearl and gold, winding among tufted islets, and losing itself among hills charged with the deep night shadows. Only a glimpse, and then all darkness and gloom as the train rattled into the half-lighted station.

And here Julie was waiting with a charming welcome. She really was delighted to see her friend, and Zamora was of all people the most desired. She took them to an hotel where she had secured rooms for the night, and on the morrow there would be a short railway journey to the station, where a carriage would await them. As soon as May had told of their encounter at Amiens, Julie became a little thoughtful and uneasy.

"Pure imagination," she cried, rallying her forces with an effort. "What one desires, that one sees! Charles is, I fancy, dancing attendance on his stepmother at one of those stupid German baths; but as to the Prince, there your discernment probably was not at fault. He is on his way to visit us, and between ourselves at his own desire, expressly to meet a young lady who is too proud to wear the willow long for a recreant lover."

Madame D'Antin's words had an effect upon May. She began to doubt the evidence of her senses. And Zamora, anxious to please her new friend, wavered a little in her faith—or so pretended.

When they left the stuffy railway carriage next morning for the handsome phaeton that awaited them with its fast-stepping trotters, nothing was more pleasant than their reception by old Gruchet the coachman, who had served the Fouchets, Julie's family, from his youth, and had recently transferred himself to the service of the D'Antins. But Julie preferred to drive herself, and with May on the box seat; Gruchet established himself with Zamora and Madame's maid in the seats at the back, where, judging from the shouts of suppressed laughter that were heard every now and then, he did not fail to prove amusing.

Through pleasant shady lanes, among orchards, meadows, and fat pastures, the horses bore them merrily. Great heaps of apples were lying under the trees, and the cider press was at work in the farmyard, where the fowls were assembled "en masse," while flocks of pigeons fluttered joyously around. Here they met a mule-cart laden with great brazen vessels full of milk, and a sturdy peasant-woman driving, who gave them a cheerful "bonjour."

Between high banks overgrown with ferns and briars and through an archway of scattered trees that had once been a grand avenue, you caught sight of the old Château half buried in verdure. A ruined gateway opened upon a grass-grown "court of honour," the buildings about which had been converted into granaries and cowsheds. A ruined bastion in one corner showed that the place had been once defensible, and even armed with artillery, and a fragment still remained of a square keep built of black basalt, which had gained for the place the name it still bore in the neighbourhood of the "château noir." But the mass of the main building still towered

above the trees, here with a steep slated roof, and there rising with a tall gabled turret—at once formal and fantastic, gay with the creepers that hung from old battered walls, and solemn as death, with its dark and broken windows that looked out like sightless eyes.

"Here is plenty of work for the Prince's camera," said Madame D'Antin lightly. "But it is a gloomy old place after all."

But skirting the walls by a newly constructed road, and crossing the moat by a wooden bridge, where the noise of the carriage disturbed a quantity of giant carp that had been sunning themselves among the waterweeds, they came upon a more cheerful scene. A pretty pavilion had been restored and redecorated, with pleasant rooms looking out upon a flower garden that had just been turfed, gravelled, and stocked with flowers.

And the Prince was on the steps to receive them. He had arrived the night before, and had made himself at home. Already he had made friends with everybody about the place, with the surly old house-dog, with the pigs even, and the chickens. Just now he had been romping with the children in the courtyard, for there was a houseful of them belonging to the farmer, who lived, encamped as it were, in the vast buildings. Where there is room the children come. He had collected, too, all the legends of the neighbourhood. How a spirit was supposed to haunt the "tour noire," which at the approaching death of a Marquis D'Antin, flew over the old Château mournfully crying, "La mort." But this had not occurred since the Revolution, when the then Marquis had been guillotined with the Girondins.

"What happiness for us if we succeed in reinstating 'la mort'!" cried Julie pettishly. "Really, Prince, you might find something more cheerful to tell us."

In truth, Madame was a good deal put out at the absence of her husband, who had gone off to the races at Deauville without a word of an excuse. But when morning brought a letter from him saying that he had met the Count de Tessier, who leased the shooting of the national forest, and that they had arranged for a grand boar hunt, and that a number of gay people would be of the party to witness or share in the pig-killing, Madame D'Antin recovered her spirits at once, and was wild on the subject of hunting costumes from that moment. And there were horses to

be provided, and everything to be done at a moment's notice.

"Or could one go in a palanquin? Suggest something, Prince!" cried Julie.

#### CHAPTER IX. HUNTING THE WILD BOAR.

FOR some days Monsieur D'Antin had been staying at the Château and making himself agreeable to his guests. He was especially attentive to May, driving her about to all the places that were worth seeing in the neighbourhood. And although Zamora accompanied them on these expeditions, yet they were not much liked by Julie, who would say to her husband:

"You bring my friend here to provide her with a good marriage—and yet do nothing to forward it."

"Ah, ma belle," D'Antin would reply, with an ambiguous smile, "am I not doing all I can to reconcile her to her future lot?"

But in truth, now that the Prince was fairly within the toils, D'Antin troubled himself no more about the match. More important matters occupied his thoughts. For some time he had felt that his position was becoming untenable. In society he felt a growing coldness towards him, which convinced him he was a suspected person. And he had had an impression for some days past that he was being watched and followed. And the arrest of the Prince, which it was arranged by the police should take place on the day of the boar hunt, would increase his danger. He might retain his place in society by a bold front, and at the cost of a few duels, perhaps; but could he escape the secret vengeance of the many Continental firebrands who regarded the Prince with fanatical devotion? And yet he could not afford to dispense with his capture.

For D'Antin's financial position was becoming desperate, and the Power that was interested in the Prince's capture was a liberal and trustworthy paymaster. Yet after all, this blood money would go but a little way in satisfying his creditors. And why should he run these risks on their behalf? The money would give him a good start on a new career in the new world, and if he could add to it the twenty-five thousand pounds which he held in trust, he might hope to make a splendid position. But strange to say he had scruples in appropriating this money, partly due to superstitious fears, for although, in Sir Charles Tyrrel's case, he scoffed at the

perils of Zamora's vengeance, yet he had secret fears of its being directed against himself. If he could do justice to May and secure the fortune at the same time!

D'Antin's notions of doing justice were peculiar. If he could persuade May to elope with him to America, the America of the south, where young republics were struggling to realise their immense natural advantages and ready to welcome a man like himself, with capital to exploit the glorious richness of the soil, and not ask too curiously as to his antecedents! There was the world that was waiting for him to conquer. But he needed a helpmate, and he flattered himself that if he could carry off May he could soon reconcile her to her lot. Any scruples she might have might be set at rest by a hasty divorce from his present wife, and a subsequent formal marriage. Zamora, too, would be in her proper element in the luxuriant sub-tropical regions of America. Already he had fired her imagination with descriptions of the delights of a life where fogs and frosts were unknown.

As to the means of evasion! Ascending to the loftiest turret window of the old Château, looking towards the west one saw where luxuriant pastures merged in sandy dunes, and over these a strip of living water sometimes darkly purple with summer skies, or again grey and gloomy with storms. And lingering on the horizon on quiet days might be seen the smoke of great Atlantic steamers, which passed regularly between the port of Havre and the South American ports, often steaming close inshore and in full view of the gay crowds that throng the broad sands of Trouville and its sister watering-places. And barely four miles from the Château was a little fishing village with a port and creek, but surrounded by rocks, and left to itself by pleasure-seekers. Now D'Antin mistrusted Havre, with its large foreign population permeated by secret societies. And nothing would be easier than to engage the harbour tug for a certain day when the Atlantic steamer was due to pass, and to intercept her and get on board. Already he had proposed a short sea trip to May, and she had seemed to like the notion; and once on board the American boat it would be too late to recede.

Yet to all outward appearance D'Antin was fully occupied with the amusements of the moment; with the village fête to which he handsomely subscribed; with the visit of the Orphéon from the neighbouring



town, who sang glees and madrigals by moonlight with great effect in the courtyard, and were entertained afterwards in the great hall; the farmer having piled all his sheaves at one end and the tables being spread at the other; great diversion being afforded by an owl flying out through a broken window, scared by the noise of the revellers.

But the boar hunt was to be the great event of the season, and the D'Antins had invited a large party for dinner, and there was to be the carré or cutting up of the game by torchlight in the courtyard, dogs baying, and horns sounding, all after the ancient method of Venerie. But in truth D'Antin had no intention of being present at these rejoicings.

"You will soon be tired of the hunt," he had said to May. "The only thing wild about it will be the costumes of the hunting people. We will steal off, you and I and Zamora, and inhale the sea breezes, and perhaps take a little voyage in the public steamer."

"Yes, I shall enjoy that," said May gratefully, little suspecting any snare in the matter.

The eve of the great hunting day had been blustering and stormy, and the night was gloomy and overcast. The wind howled among the heavy chimney-shafts of the old Château, and sounded like many voices calling from the dark recesses of its deserted chambers; and when the wind was hushed for awhile, in the stillness could be heard a moaning sound of the great roaring billows that dashed against the rocks of the Atlantic shore. Evil dreams hung about the old Château, and descended upon restless sleepers; the horses plunged and reared in their stables, terrified by sounds inaudible to the general. In the night May awoke with a feeling of terrible oppression; she heard the beating of wings and a strange, inarticulate cry. It was "la mort, la mort," repeated over and over again, with a tone of dreadful significance.

After all, it was only a screech-owl, perhaps; and May slept again, to be awakened by bright sunshine and the sounds of music. The stormy winds that with such rudeness blew had blown themselves out at last, and the morning air was crisp and delightful. And in front of the window a pleasant sight was to be seen. On the road was the pack of great rough dogs, united by couples, and in the midst of them rode the piqueur in green and gold, and the "valets" were gathered round on

their stout, serviceable horses, each with the monstrous "cor de chasse" slung round his shoulders. But when they put their horns to their lips, and sounded the reveillé, all in unison, with that clear, stirring note that seems to ring out from the heart of centuries past, while the dogs joined in with happy clamour, nothing more full of the melancholy joy of autumn could well be imagined.

May hastened down, all forebodings forgotten, meaning to have some talk with the piqueurs and the dogs, but the former were all at breakfast in the great kitchen of the farm, and the dogs, who had been turned into the barn, set up such a ferocious baying at her approach that she left them to their surly selves; and then she strayed into the old garden, where lovely pears were ripening against the high walls, guarded by an old Cerberus of a gardener who farmed the produce.

"Cinq sous la pièce," he cried, as May approached them lovingly. And he intimated that he required the money down.

In the old summer-house she saw the Prince, and went to speak to him, but drew back when she reached him, for he was like one beside himself with anguish, twisting his hands, and writhing as if in agony; but presently he came out, pale, but composed, and greeted May with grave composure.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked kindly. "Are you suffering?"

"Only from a nervous crisis that overtakes me sometimes," he answered calmly. "But I am glad to have met you here, for I can say farewell to you now, and thank you for the many pleasant moments you have given me."

"Ah! you have had bad news, and are going away," said May sadly. "I am very sorry for you."

"And that sorrow," said the Prince, "is the one consolation I have in departure. Do not cease to be sorry for me till you cease to remember me."

"Aha, my dear Prince," said D'Antin's cheerful voice, "a hunting morning is an early morning. Come in, all of you, and eat something before you start, for when the hour of déjeuner arrives, who knows where we shall be?"

At the last moment, Madame D'Antin had given up the idea of riding—saddle-horses not being obtainable—and the whole party were driven in a light wagonette to the forest, the men alighting to take their stations with guns and cartridge-belts at the "rond point" where all the roads and rides through the forest met. And here

was the piqueur with his dogs, like a spider in the middle of his web, arranging his plan of campaign, and assigning to each his station. And as the silent forest echoed to the cry of dogs and blare of horns, and horsemen galloped here and there, and gay costumes glittered among the trees, the whole formed a pleasant and effective spectacle from the human point of view. What the "sanglier" thought of it is another matter.

For after all, the affair was more of a battue than a hunt, the boars often shot down in front of the hounds, or when brought to bay, quietly settled by the piqueur's carbine. Still there was just a spice of danger to season the sport, for a wounded sanglier is not to be disposed of like a fox or a hare, and when the "mother of the forest" charged out upon the carriages, followed by a very herd of young sounders, there followed a stampede among the spectators that caused many a cheek to blanch.

The Prince, who in public passed simply as Monsieur Paulson, had been stationed near the edge of the forest, where possibly the herd might attempt to break away. And Monsieur D'Antin was just visible through the trees. The cry of dogs and the winding of horns now sounded faint in the distance, and the Prince seated himself under a tree, and seemed to wait events. He amused himself meanwhile by dissecting one of the cartridges supplied by his host, and smiled bitterly as he rubbed the pretended bullet to powder in his fingers.

"It only wanted that," he muttered, "and now obedience!" And leaving his gun where it lay, but loosening a knife in its sheath, he walked towards his victim. D'Antin saw the glitter of his eye, and shouted to him to keep off.

"Take care of thyself, traitor!" cried the Prince.

D'Antin fired, and the Prince staggered, but rushed on more fiercely; he evaded a sweeping blow from the other's clubbed rifle, and the two closed together and fell heavily to the ground.

Cautiously approaching from different parts of the forest, a number of police agents, whose blue peasants' blouses concealed their short swords and revolvers, had gradually enclosed the space within which the Prince had been stationed. They saw him at last sitting on the ground, his back resting against a tree as if fatigued. Stalking him cautiously, and taking advantage of every tuft and bush, some half-

dozen came within reach of the seated figure and made a rush upon it. "You are my prisoner," cried the chief, seizing the Prince by the arm. But he made no movement; he was dead.

A little further on lay the body of D'Antin, his face still contorted with the hate and fury of the death-struggle. The brigadier of gendarmes looked from one to the other with something of admiration in his glance. "Men of this stamp," he cried, "can do anything!"

#### CHAPTER X. IN A SECRET PRISON.

LEAVING England in the first instance for Brussels, a run across the Continent to Lisbon, where he would find a quick boat to carry him to the African coast, did not seem to be anything like a difficult undertaking. But at the first station the train stopped at over the Belgian frontier, the carriage door had been opened, and Charles invited to step out. "I have nothing dutiable," he said, offering the key of his portmanteau. But it was no affair of the Custom House. He saw with anger and indignation the train depart without him, and when he was at last conducted before a respectable police commissary, he did not fail to express his feelings freely. But that official, calmly regarding him through his spectacles, proceeded to fold a margin on the flimsy official paper, and began to put the usual questions, "Your name and Christian name, age, occupation," and so on. Now, unluckily, Charles, for the sake of avoiding observation, had assumed the travelling name of Charles Thompson. "Having begun with it, better stick to it," he said to himself. But his slight hesitation had not escaped the keen professional ear.

Thus launched upon a career of deception, and desirous above all things to conceal his real status and destination, he began to flounder hopelessly in the mesh of official interrogatories; and he felt himself that the commissary had every reason to regard him as a suspicious character. Then he was told that he had been denounced as a spy, and that the evidence against him justified his arrest. And presently he found himself in the condition of a prisoner, stripped and searched, and finally locked up in an evil-smelling cell, where he was made as comfortable, however, as circumstances permitted. In the morning he was marched between two policemen to a bald-looking court house in the centre

of the town, and presently introduced to the investigating Judge in a rather snug little room almost filled with a wide table, on which were piled a number of objects he recognised as having once belonged to him. At the present moment he felt that nothing belonged to him, and that he could hardly call his soul his own.

There was a shirt-collar with the name Tyrrel marked in full, a railway map marked with crosses where he had been told there was a good "buffet," and a guide-book with the usual plans. And there were his despatches carefully sealed as he had received them.

"Break the seals," said the Judge curtly.

Charles declined with a gesture. The Judge broke the seal himself and spread out the contents. To his great relief Charles saw that all the despatches were in cypher. It was a tough job to interpret that cypher even when one had the key, which was a sentence Charles had to learn by heart. There were several hundred thousand permutations for each letter, and it was calculated that it would take years to decipher a syllable without the key. Hence as long as he held his tongue the secret was safe.

But the Judge seemed to regard these secret despatches as convincing proofs of the accusation of being a spy. The case was serious, and important revelations might be expected after a little pressure had been put upon the culprit. And this report he sent with all the documents to his brother Judge of the superior Court at the nearest assize town, who failing to make any more out of the prisoner, remanded him "au secret"; and it was while being shifted from one prison to another that he recognised the voice and hand of May.

But if solitude were irksome, still more so were the constant perquisitions of the examining Judge, who was untiring in his efforts, either by cajolery or menace, to induce Charles to reveal the contents of his despatches.

"If they are innocent, why not reveal them? Your persistence denotes a guilty conscience!"

But Charles's native obstinacy prevailed, nothing could be got out of him; and at last in despair the Judge announced that he should leave him for trial at the next assizes, when a country jury, who detested spies, would be sure to find a verdict against him, and when outraged justice would sentence him to at least five years' imprisonment.

Again he was one day turned out of his solitary cell to visit that indefatigable

Judge. But this time his manner was entirely changed; he was courteous, complaisant, offered a cigar and the morning paper. Charles suspected a snare, and retained a mistrustful attitude.

"You see," said the Judge amicably, "the paragraph in our foreign intelligence: 'The disputed questions of boundary in our African possessions have at last been settled, we fear, too much to the satisfaction of our susceptible neighbours.'"

"Does not that interest you?" asked the Judge archly. "Then you, perhaps, will be more affected by the news that orders have been received to set you at liberty forthwith. So now you can proceed on your mission, and I have only to wish you 'bon voyage.'"

"One moment," cried Charles; "can't you tell me who put you upon my track?"

The Judge shrugged his shoulders.

"Probably you had friends about you interested in your movements. Another question in return. How did you contrive, in spite of all our precautions, to exchange signals with a young lady?"

"Ah, that young lady," cried Charles. "On my honour it was accidental. But can you tell me where she was going?"

"To the Château D'Antin," replied the Judge kindly. "You are going that way yourself, perhaps? Well, take care not to get into another wasps' nest. Again 'bon voyage.'"

#### CHAPTER XI. A TRUE LOVER'S KNOT.

NEVER was arrival more opportune than that of Charles Tyrrel at the gate of the old Château. May had seen him coming from afar, scarcely at first believing in the evidence of her eyes, and ran to meet him ere the great bell had ceased clanking. He held out his arms yearningly, and she flew to their shelter.

"You will take me home, Charles!" she cried.

For the Château was in the direst confusion. Death is a serious thing, no doubt, but debt is more serious still in the eyes of the paysan, and a little swarm of creditors surrounded the doors whence the funeral convoi of the Marquis D'Antin had not long departed. The farmer was there who had advanced his savings to his landlord; the innkeeper and general dealer of the village, red-faced and thick-voiced, who took his seat on the steps and vowed that nothing should pass out till he was settled with. And there was an uneasy feeling

about that sacrés English spies were at the bottom of the whole catastrophe. May was hooted if she showed herself at the window, and Zamora in crossing the court was pelted with stones by the children.

For poor Julie, whose grief had been most heartrending, there was much consolation in the arrival of her grey-headed father, from whom she had long been estranged. He was secretly a little relieved that his son-in-law had departed from the world without open scandal. His home—a lovely mansion on the bank of the river—was open to receive her. Henceforth he would speak with pride of “my daughter la marquise.” But Julie’s guests were an embarrassment! Hence was Charles doubly welcome on his arrival.

Horses and carriages were alike unavailable, imprisoned by a detachment of creditors, but Charles had retained the conveyance that brought him from the station, which was now waiting in the avenue. The burly innkeeper was at first inclined to dispute the passage out of May’s baggage, and to claim a right of examination, but shamed by Gruchet’s exclamation: “What, open a lady’s trunks!” he grudgingly moved aside. And the driver whipped his horses into a gallop before the little crowd had made up its mind to hostile demonstrations, and Zamora, who had been almost pale while this was going on, shook her fist triumphantly at the gaping rustics.

Once more the grey towers of Windsor are in sight; but here a sad piece of news awaits the return of the travellers. The good old Major is dead. He passed away peaceably in the night—the last night of all—and they laid the old warrior to rest in the quiet churchyard of the Berkshire village, where tablets and old monuments told of others of the race, and a plain marble slab in the chancel recorded the fate of Hugh Wyvern, “treacherously slain in the wilds of Africa.” And in the freshly-turned mould was buried all memory of former wrongs, for if Zamora knows, she will never tell; for is not her beloved Missie May now still more beloved as the wife of Charles Tyrrel?

They were married quietly in a City church the day after the Major’s funeral, for there was no longer a home for May in the Castle Ward, and the quaint old house awaited the coming of another old warrior Knight. It was with terrible misgivings as to the future that Charles took this rash step. Zamora affirmed that she had married them quite effectually, and that the rest was

superfluous; but hardly had they reached a little cottage by the river, which a friend had lent to Charles for the honeymoon, when May, full of curiosity, brought out a mysterious package which Madame D’Antin had thrust into her hands at parting. It was endorsed, “To be opened after Miss Wyvern’s marriage,” and was sealed with a seal that bore the Tyrrel device—a sheaf of arrows passant. And when opened a sheaf of bonds fell out, twenty-five thousand pounds in value, with the authority to transfer them on May Wyvern’s marriage, signed Chas. Tyrrel.

“My dear old father. It is his wedding present. He forgives us, and gives us his blessing.”

And Charles folded his young wife to his arms ecstatically. Zamora smiled a capacious smile as she witnessed their delight.

It did not so much matter now about Charles’s diplomatic career, which Charles assured himself was quite ruined by his late fiasco. But quite otherwise. Lord Camus received his kinsman with effusive cordiality.

“You have shown, my dear boy,” he said, “the supreme quality of a diplomatist, the capacity to hold his tongue. Had you made a fuss and appealed to us, as too many of your confrères would have done, you might have embroiled two powerful nations whose best interests lie in peace and good will. Rely upon us to push your interests.”

The next day they were upon the river, autumn still lingering in the woods, and the foliage in all the glory of its dying leaves, that the first winter gale would scatter. How quiet and peaceable it all was; the round tower of Windsor just visible over the trees, the standard hanging motionless; the birds all silent, and only the hum of a distant threshing-machine in the air.

Charles was stretched at the bottom of the punt, which was moored to an old willow root; his head in his wife’s lap, who was weaving a chaplet of water weeds to crown him as a river god. Zamora was crouched at their feet, and busied over Charles’s disengaged wrist with a little pointed shell and ivory hammer. She was finishing a tattooed charm about the previous incision which was to secure long life, prosperity, and all sorts of good things to the young couple.

“Now, master, him finished,” said Zamora proudly.

“Do you call that a fetich?” said Charles, lazily regarding the device. “I should say it was a true lover’s knot.”



## AUTUMN LEAVES.

## WORTH A GUINEA.

## CHAPTER I.

BERNARD GRAVES was tall and good-looking, though not handsome enough to be noticed in a crowd, for the casual observer does not pause to admire an expression which denotes merely a manly and straightforward nature. His own personal appearance was, however, far from his thoughts at this moment, for he was in a London lodging seated by a horsehair sofa on which his mother, a delicate-looking lady, was resting, and the two were earnestly conversing.

"You had better go, my boy," Mrs. Graves said gently, laying her hand in that of the young man. "You must not think of me, indeed you must not. This opening in the Natal Mounted Police offers you exactly the life you would most enjoy."

"I'm not going to leave you, mother, so put that thought out of your head. I only wish I had not been so con——so idle, for now there seems nothing I can do here. I'm not even fit to be a clerk, as I never could add up a column of figures and make it come twice alike; and besides, those German fellows, who are as short-sighted as moles, get first chance at the offices because they can spout French and write it like natives. There's nothing I can do in England, and yet I'm determined to stick to the old country."

These two had each other, so they could still make light of their heavy misfortunes. Bernard again registered a vow that nothing should part him from his widowed mother. She had but him to comfort her, and her life hung on a thread.

"Mr. Samson has been very kind, and I do hope he will have found something for me to do," continued Bernard. "He promised to be here by six o'clock. After all, mother, it isn't the first time people have lost all their money, and as long as we can rub on we will not be dependent on any one."

"Sarah," to the little lodging-house maid, "if Mr. Samson calls, show him up without leaving him on the door-mat."

"Please, sir, will it be his Christian name?" asked Sarah.

Before Bernard could ease Sarah's mind on this point there was a sound of the door-bell, and so, leaving her heavy tray

on the next landing, she ran down to answer it.

Mr. Samson was a lawyer. He was not an old family friend, but having been called in by Mrs. Graves to see what could be saved out of the general ruin, he had been much interested both in mother and son, and had done all he could to secure to her a small remnant of her fortune.

"That is kind of you," said Mrs. Graves, holding out her thin white hand. "You are really a friend in need—and you have known so little of us, Mr. Samson."

Mr. Samson was a shy man. He deprecated thanks with a motion of his hand, and then, after greeting Bernard, he sat down himself, and then tried to find a safe resting-place for his hat.

"I fear I have not been successful in finding anything which you would call suitable, or which, in fact, you are likely to accept, Mr. Graves."

"Indeed, I will accept anything," said Bernard. "I know I can't expect much, but I won't leave England, and I don't mean to starve."

"Ah, yes, just so, but—well, you have heard of Mr. Blackley——"

Who has not heard of Mr. Blackley's great establishment which can provide man, woman, and child, from birth to death, with every necessary and unnecessary requirement? But this time both mother and son remained silent, and Mr. Samson continued, in a slightly sarcastic tone:

"Just so. You say you would not mind sweeping a crossing, but to stand behind a counter—and yet let me assure you, Mr. Graves, that there are men there who have——"

"Forgive me," said Bernard, "I own that at the first moment I wished you could have found something better, but I have said I don't care what I do, and I mean it."

"I have personally known Mr. Blackley some years. He is just, sometimes even generous. He will undertake to find you a post, Mr. Graves, and he will put up with such qualifications as you possess—that is, which I hope you possess."

"Bernard is——"

"I mean," continued the lawyer, "punctuality, precision, unquestioning obedience, and an unflinching desire to oblige."

Bernard was once more full of fun.

"If he required twice this number of virtues I would try to cultivate them."

"Well spoken. Mrs. Graves, you must try and not discourage your son."

There was a flush of disappointed pride on the mother's pale face, but she schooled herself to hide it. Bernard was her only child, and he had always been so good to her.

"You have been more than kind, Mr. Samson. How can I put any hindrance in my boy's path?"

"Just so. Now I must leave you. Pray excuse a short visit. I shall see Mr. Blackley this evening, and he will expect to see you to-morrow at ten o'clock punctually."

When the door closed upon the lawyer, Mrs. Graves could not quite repress her feelings.

"Oh, Bernard, you a shopkeeper! No, you had better leave me."

"Why, mother, if I did, most likely I should keep a store at the antipodes, and where's the odds? I should lose you and gain what?"

"But no one would know you out there——"

"Well, that seems a poor sort of a reason. No, pride be hanged, mother. I shall come home every evening, and think of your sweet face awaiting me. You won't welcome me the less because I serve in a shop."

We may as well add that the interview with Mr. Blackley was satisfactory. This successful man was wont to be short and sharp with his new employes, but Mr. Samson had prepared the way. He received the young man very kindly, and to Bernard's great satisfaction he found that he should not have to measure out yards of silk to ladies, but that he would have to be a species of policeman. As a shop-walker his duties were manifold but not disagreeable. He was to arrive early and to enter the names of all the employes and the time of their arrival. He was to see that all was left in order in the evening, and he was to receive the customers and to conduct them to the counter where things they desired could be procured. Another of his duties was to keep a sharp look-out for light-handed customers, besides other occupations which time, as Mr. Blackley said, would teach him. It was certainly a post of trust, though by this time he had brought himself to see no objection to serving behind a counter; but Mr. Blackley in a few words showed him that to be a good salesman needed long training, and that, in fact, in that capacity, Mr. Bernard Graves would be useless to him.

"As for the post I offer you, I have fifty men anxious to take it, so I wish to speak plainly. Take it or leave it, but if you take

it I shall require you to sign these rules. You see the last is that on an emergency you will not refuse to fill any post for which I require your services."

"In for a penny, in for a pound," thought Bernard, and taking up a pen he said: "Thank you—I accept. Shall I sign my name here?"

"If you please. You are a gentleman, and I am sure I can trust your word; but still, business is business, and sometimes——"

"I'll do my best," said Bernard, and this closed the interview. His salary was more than he had expected, and would make all the difference in the world to the happiness and well-being of his mother. In this way Bernard earned his first gold piece, and very soon he was able to feel a pride in doing his best in order to give full satisfaction to his employer.

#### CHAPTER II.

BERNARD had been at his new employment about a month when a slight incident occurred which brought back some of the regrets he felt at the loss of his money; regrets which he had earnestly tried to smother.

The London season was well advanced when one day a young lady, as she walked out of the shop, tripped over a stand and dropped all her parcels on the floor. Bernard, being close at hand, sprang to her assistance, and picking up her property returned it to her. She just glanced at him, not in the way, he thought, a young lady would look at a gentleman who had done her a service, but rather casually, that is, though she expressed her thanks very graciously.

"Thank you very much. It was stupid of me to let my things fall," she said, laughing softly.

By this time Bernard had, however, looked at her, and was suddenly fascinated by the charming expression of her face. She was not strikingly pretty, but there was something so pleasant about her and so taking that he was immediately captivated. Her figure, too, was perfect, and she looked the picture of health. In spite of himself Bernard found her face photographed on his memory, and as one of the things she had dropped was a card-case which had flown open and showed its contents, he managed to read the printed name: "Miss Iona Sudeley." In two minutes more she had stepped into a carriage which was waiting at the door, and Bernard saw her no more.

"I say, mother," he announced that evening, "I've seen a girl to-day who answers to my idea of perfection. She had a divine smile, and she walked like a goddess."

"Oh, Bernard! not a—young lady in the shop?"

"Her name is the only remembrance she left me, and that I discovered for myself, but it is one not easily forgotten—Miss Iona Sudeley."

"Sudeley? There was a General of that name who——"

"It doesn't the least matter what he did, for I shall never see her again."

"Why not? Mr. Blackley will soon find out your worth, and he will offer you a partnership."

Bernard laughed heartily.

"He would perhaps offer me his blessing, nothing more. As to Miss Iona Sudeley, she was gracious—you know some ladies who come are positively rude—but, nevertheless, she hardly looked at me. I say, mother, it's beastly hot this evening, and you look as if you wanted country air. When I get my ten days' holiday I wish we could go to the sea."

"We mustn't afford it, dear; every guinea is of importance to us."

"We must. I'm trying to make plans to earn a little more money."

Thus Bernard talked off his disappointment, and very soon he was as bright as ever, though all that evening he could not forget the face of Miss Iona Sudeley.

The next day Bernard was preparing to go off duty at the dinner-hour, when he received a summons to Mr. Blackley's private room. Unless something had gone wrong this was a very unusual request, and Bernard was somewhat concerned as he entered the great man's office. Mr. Blackley had the quick, decided manners of a very successful business man. He was not in the habit of wasting words, and now he merely nodded a hasty greeting.

"I am sorry to detain you a few minutes, Mr. Graves, but an order has come in, and I think that you are well fitted to supply the need."

"Yes, sir," said Bernard, who had already learnt that the fewest words gave the most satisfaction to his autocratic employer.

"Very well. I conclude that you have a dress coat and that you can dance?"

Bernard's looks expressed his astonishment.

"Well?" said Mr. Blackley impatiently. His time was precious.

"Yes, sir, but I fail to see——"

"That was not my question, I am coming to that. Here is the order: 'Can you supply one or two gentlemanly dancers for an evening party? Mrs. Meadowsweet's party will be spoilt if she cannot find a few more dancing men.' I have several in reserve, but you are the only man on the spot. I never give myself useless trouble, life is too short."

Bernard's face flushed to the roots of his hair.

"This hardly forms part of our agreement," he murmured.

Mr. Blackley immediately produced his printed form and showed Bernard his own signature.

"Excuse me. You agreed—but of course, I don't insist on any of our employes giving unwilling service. My time is short—yes, or no."

Bernard stared at his signature and then considered that, however strange the request might be, he had in fact promised to be ready for all emergencies. Here was one of them, an extraordinary one certainly, and one which he specially disliked, but after all——

"You will secure a guinea for an evening's pleasant exercise, Mr. Graves. Now, if you please, your answer?"

"Yes," said Bernard heartily. A guinea would add to the store he was laying up for his mother's holiday.

Bernard went home looking rather thoughtful, and somehow he found it impossible to tell his mother; indeed, at the last moment he merely announced that he was going out to a dance the next evening.

"Oh, Bernard, but where are you going? How very nice for you! I am extremely glad, as I was afraid people would have nothing more to do with us now that we are poor."

"Oh, it isn't any one I know. It's through some one at Blackley's," said Bernard, turning away to hide his confusion.

"Not a——"

"No, no, it's all right, mother."

Mrs. Graves was rather puzzled at this invitation, especially when Bernard mentioned the name, Mrs. Meadowsweet, in Causton Square.

"Well, dear boy, I hope you will enjoy yourself. You always were fond of dancing, and the girls were always delighted to have you for a partner."

"Oh, I'm only going to oblige an acquaintance, I shan't enjoy it."

Then Bernard changed the conversation, and his mother wondered why he had accepted this if he cared so little about it.

The next day Bernard found a card of invitation awaiting him on his desk, and on it was written "Please come early." All through the day the invitation hung heavy upon the young man's mind, and he wished many times that he had not promised to go, but it was too late to retract.

Mrs. Meadowsweet was a lady whose chief ambition was to be well spoken of by the élite. If any of her parties had been pronounced dull, she would certainly have fallen ill of disappointment. She not only made her receptions pleasant, but she spared no pains to make them famous. She knew that fashionable folk, who are so very difficult to please, said that people really enjoyed a dance at Mrs. Meadowsweet's. She never crowded the rooms, they said, with women—wallflowers they called them—whom no one could dance with; besides, at her parties, the men never refused to dance; they knew better than to give themselves airs. It was wonderful how she managed it, but the fact remained that hers was one of the few houses where all was not done for show but also for pleasure. On this special evening the scene was a brilliant one, for the lady's forethought had guarded against any probable dullness. Bernard had been received in a little downstairs sitting-room with these words:

"Ah, yes—Mr. Graves—how'd do? You will dance all the evening, if you please. I will introduce you to the right girls. There are some girls whom none of the fashionable young men will dance with. Thank you. Yes. I hear you are fond of dancing." "He almost looks like a gentleman," she added to herself, as she condescendingly enumerated her commands and noted Bernard's shy manner.

He heartily wished himself away, though he tried to see the fun of the situation; he felt much more inclined to run downstairs and to escape out of the house than to make himself universally agreeable. Very soon he was in a crush. Beautiful dresses if not beautiful girls surrounded him, he heard light banter around him, acquaintances greeted each other with counterfeited cordiality, and gentlemen were seen eagerly securing dances from the prettiest girls or from the best dancers. Suddenly Mrs. Meadowsweet introduced Bernard to one plain girl, then to others

equally uninteresting. Mechanically he booked the dances and tried to make a few remarks, but he did not smile. However, his quiet gravity was apparently a recommendation, for suddenly Mrs. Meadowsweet was stopped by a lady with the request:

"Do introduce me to that very nice-looking fellow, Mrs. Meadowsweet. Iona would like to dance with him, I am sure. You know she is mad about dancing, and every one notices how well he dances."

"Oh, Iona gets so many partners, she wants no more. I never think of her, but——"

Then, afraid of refusing, to Bernard's intense horror, Mrs. Meadowsweet introduced him to the very girl who had so much attracted him in the shop. If she had been charming in morning attire she was now, he thought, perfectly angelic, and yet no one could be more simply dressed than she was. Bernard was almost tongue-tied as he saw her looking straight up into his face. Iona, seeing his evident shyness, helped him out in her soft, gentle manner as she spoke in the same sweet voice he had already admired.

"My aunt knows I love dancing. Thank you, I have not yet many dances filled up as we have only just come, and Mrs. Meadowsweet makes all the men fill up their cards early. She never forgives a man who stands at the door and looks on. It is nice of her. One can enjoy oneself so much more if one knows other girls are having a good time, and are not hating you for dancing."

Bernard's power of speech returned. He saw that she did not recognise him; indeed, how should she?

"Will you really give me a dance?" he asked. "It is too kind of you."

Iona laughed again.

"The favour is on your side. You don't look as if you cared to dance."

"I came on purpose," he said, rather bitterly.

Iona was enchanted.

"How nice of you to say so! Now I shan't feel you are doing it as a duty. Some of the men here treat one as a parcel to be whirled round for ten minutes and then dropped with pleasure at its destination."

"Not with you," said poor Bernard. "They couldn't think that, I'm sure they couldn't."

"It's kind of you to say that; but don't you know that the two American sisters



are here? You must know them, and they are the rage. Look, there they are, covered with diamonds. The men can talk of nothing else. They are immensely rich, and their father was a shopkeeper."

Bernard winced as he glanced at the ladies. He had not been introduced to them, and he was not sorry.

"Ah!"

"I declare you are not one bit interested. Shall we say the third and the seventh dance?"

"And the ninth too," said Bernard, "and then I shall nearly have filled up my card."

"You ought to keep just one in case you get the chance of dancing with one of the 'United States,'" she said, laughing softly.

With trembling fingers Bernard filled up the numbers she mentioned, and then his hostess claimed him in order to introduce him to a very stout young lady with imperceptible eyes. He bowed and murmured something about the pleasure of a dance, but his mind was full of Iona.

No need to chronicle his dances with others. All the time he was thinking only of Iona, and his partners forgave his silence because they found that his dancing was perfection. Mrs. Meadowsweet, hearing his praises, congratulated herself and silently praised her own cleverness, little guessing that "the young man who had come to dance" was going through a strange experience, and that he had fallen in love at first sight. His first dance with Iona was almost silent bliss. His second included supper, and in his eagerness to serve her he spilt a glass of champagne down her dress. Iona did not even exclaim impatiently as he apologised.

"I'm awfully sorry, I really am. Will you forgive me?" he asked, full of contrition.

"It's of no consequence whatever; please don't be sorry. Let's go into the ante-room, I will get a servant to wipe it off."

She put her hand on his arm, and then he was glad of the accident. The ante-room was cool and refreshing. It contained a pretty balcony full of flowers, and two chairs were placed there inviting them to sit down.

"How sweet! Let's sit here a minute, if you don't mind. Do you know it is very strange, but I seem to think that I have seen you before. I can't think where, and I don't remember your name at all."

Bernard felt his face flush all over. He

longed to say straight out, "I was the man at Blackley's who picked up your parcels," but he dared not; for the sake of his hostess he must not say that, so he only murmured:

"I think we have met before."

"You are so unlike my ordinary partners that it is odd I can't remember the occasion."

"I don't think it is odd," he muttered.

"I hardly ever go out to parties; in fact, I don't think I shall ever go to another."

"Oh, dear, then we shall not meet again, unless——"

"Not at parties," said Bernard, still more dejectedly.

"Well, perhaps at the sea. We are going to a little place called Porlock Weir. My uncle—I'm an orphan—hunts there. Last year the stag rushed close by me and swam out to sea, and the horrid fishermen rowed out and brought it back again. Do you know I cried so much when they brought the poor thing back to kill it on the beach. I offered them money to let it escape."

"Did you? I should never have killed it," said Bernard.

"That is nice of you. If you are near there you won't go out hunting?"

"My mother must go to the sea, but——"

"There is a delightful hotel there, and we have been to it, but this time we are going to take a whole house to ourselves. Girls often go out stag-hunting, but I never will."

"Our dance is over," said Bernard, "and I deprived you of it," he said regretfully.

"There is one more. You do dance so well. I see Captain Lacy is quite jealous of you because the two 'United States' noticed your dancing and wanted to be introduced to you. Shall I——"

"Oh no, no. I'm engaged—besides, indeed, I'm not in society."

"But you are. Don't you call this society? Mrs. Meadowsweet is very much sought after. I expect it was your beautiful dancing that made her ask you—or perhaps"—and Iona laughed—"perhaps you are very rich."

"I haven't a penny, and I work for my living."

"That's just what Mr. Cecil Reed said to me last night. He has about five thousand a year, and races, you know."

"Cecil Reed! I know him by hearsay, but I assure you that my poverty is a literal fact."

The music was heard and they were forced to go, for duty called Bernard to the

side of a very plain and awkward young lady who had Dutch blood in her veins, and stuttered painfully. His last dance with Iona Sudeley seemed to him the end of all things. After that the deluge.

"May I say—that I have enjoyed my dances with you immensely?" he murmured. "I shall never dance again—never, and so you will be the last bright spot in my life."

"Not dance again! Not if I am there? That will be unkind. But I don't quite believe that pretty speech! However, I always manage to see people again if I want to."

"Do you want to see me again?"

"Yes, I do," she said, half laughing. "You haven't said one silly thing to-night except about not dancing again, and you do enjoy dancing without looking bored."

"I was bored in between our dances. Good-bye; let me say it now, as we shall never meet again."

He spoke so earnestly that Iona looked up at him; something in that look, something in the expression of his face touched a hidden chord, and her own sweet truthful eyes seemed to say that if it depended on her they should meet again.

### CHAPTER III.

BERNARD was certainly changed, so thought his mother, "and it dates," she said to herself, "from that day that he went to a dance." She could not make it out. He was silent, he brooded in the evening instead of laughing and talking over his day's experiences. Now and then he woke up and tried to be cheerful, but she could see that on those occasions his merriment was forced. What could be the matter with him? He must be feeling the strain and the irksomeness of this new work, and she must take him away to have a breath of sea air. So the fond mother meditated, but none of her speculations hit the truth. Bernard, on his side, was having a fierce if silent struggle. He called himself an idiot and a confounded ass, and other strong appellatives, for having fallen in love at first sight. He hated himself now for not having spoken the truth, and for not having told Iona where it was that she had seen him. He would then have seen her look of surprise, perhaps added to a haughtiness of manner which would have cured him. Well, he was thoroughly punished. Happily he should most likely never meet her again, at least he hoped that he should not do so.

A week passed, and he was still in this frame of mind, though happily for him he had to think of so many things during business hours that he could not entirely give himself up to ceaseless dreaming. As it was, he was twice reprimanded in an amiable manner by Mr. Blackley. Perhaps the worst moment was when the latter handed to him the guinea as the payment for his dance. He would willingly, had he dared, have returned it to him. Imagine being paid for dancing with Iona, for the sweetest moment life had or ever would give him! It was terrible, unheard-of, and the guinea became a load upon his conscience. What should he do with it? At last he carefully wrapped it up and put it in a corner of his purse, determined that nothing on earth should tempt him to use it.

One day, when the department over which Bernard presided was very full, an employé hastened up to him.

"Graves, have you got a pound in your pocket? There is a lady on the other side who wants to change a note, and I have it all but one pound. Here it is; do you mind attending to her, as I must go?"

"Certainly," said Bernard, and he hastened across to the opposite counter.

The lady turned suddenly, and he saw that Iona was facing him. For a moment she remained silent, whilst he felt his face flush painfully, and the whole place seemed to swim round with him. Outwardly he retained a cold impassibility.

"Here is your change," he said in a very low voice.

If he had not spoken, perhaps, Iona might have believed that she was face to face with Mr. Graves's double, but no other man could have the voice which had so much delighted her. She did not even like to think of all the little manoeuvres she had gone through in order to find out the history of the Mr. Graves she had danced with. She had called on Mrs. Meadowsweet, and she had led up to the subject, but in vain. She had enquired of every acquaintance, and she had been told many imaginary histories of various Graves, but she had never met him again.

And now—and now— She was too astonished to think much, she only wished to make sure that she was not dreaming.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, but are you—you must be Mr. Graves. It is kind of you to trouble yourself about my change. Are you going on, or——?"

Poor Bernard! If only she had not looked so lovely, so charming, and so natural; if only he had not lost his heart to her so completely; if only—— Further deceit was impossible to him; he had gone very near it the other night; now, he said to himself that whatever it might cost him he would be true. He might still pretend, and get her out of the shop; but no, why should he be ashamed of honest toil?

"Miss Sudeley, I am on duty here. I am one of Mr. Blackley's employes," he said simply, though in a low voice. He expected Iona to make some polite speech and to hasten away, but again he was mistaken in her.

"Do you know that it is a mere chance that I am here to-day? It was only because my aunt was tired that I promised to do this commission for her. I am glad to have met you again. I wanted to tell you——" As if by instinct they had turned into a small room now empty, as it was a repository for umbrellas and the weather was extremely fine.

"I have been also wishing to see you," he murmured, hardly knowing what he was saying.

"But—but—I don't quite understand. You know Mrs. Meadowsweet very well, I suppose. She wouldn't tell me about you the other day. Perhaps she thought——" and here Iona's soft laughter made poor Bernard wish the floor would open and bury him in ruins of lath and plaster.

"No, no; I don't know her; in fact—how can I tell you?"

"Oh, now I see. Why didn't you tell me the other evening? I said I had seen you before, and now I recollect. It was here. You helped me to pick up all my bundles."

"Yes; I know I ought to have told you——"

"Of course you ought. But—oh, Mr. Graves, you didn't really think me such a snob as to have minded, did you?"

"You are perfect; but don't you see how impossible it all is? You must despise me, but I must tell you that the other night I was paid for coming! There now; don't speak to me again if you despise me too much; but I promised Mr. Blackley to do all he required of me, and this was one of his requirements. But I can never do it again. You see what a false position it put me in, and—and—I have been too much punished. I thought it might help our slender means. My mother wants a

holiday. We have had great trouble and great losses, and—well, of course, I'm not ashamed of working for her, you understand, but—but—for her I was going to emigrate."

He spoke quickly, for he wanted to get it all over. He had not let her have time to answer, and again he hoped that she would leave him; and now that his conscience was at ease he should drive all thoughts of her out of his head.

Again he was surprised at the girl's next words. She raised her head slightly, thus showing off her slight figure to full advantage; then there came the sweetest imaginable smile on her lips, not the scornful smile he had expected to see, but one full of kindness, as she held out her hand to him.

"Indeed, Mr. Graves, you don't understand. If there is anything to be ashamed of, Mrs. Meadowsweet is the person to feel the shame. But you may trust me; I shall not reveal her secrets; and you seem to forget that a gentleman is one anywhere and everywhere, or rather, you forget that we women think so, and that we know a true man when we meet him. As for the rest, forgive me, I can't help laughing. It was funny, wasn't it?"

Her graciousness had made the shop a sort of paradise; nothing now seemed to matter, he even wanted her to think other than she did; he argued against himself as he said:

"But of course I was acting a lie. I was pretending that I was a man with money when it is just the opposite, and I was deceiving you, you who are a true woman."

"Then don't do it again. I must go; please tell me your mother's address. If she wants sea air, we are going to take a much bigger house than we need, and it would be a kindness if she would come and fill it."

Bernard shook his head.

"We shall go into very humble lodgings. But of course mother would like to see you. Would you really go and see her, Miss Sudeley? It is much worse for her, this change, than it is for me."

"If I might? As for this place, I wish my brother were here with you. The last time I heard from him he was a bus conductor in Brisbane, after running through a considerable fortune."

They parted, but not before, once more, she had looked up at him, and he had felt that the world contained but two women,

one his mother and the other this sweetest, most loveable, most noble Iona Su leley.

"Bernard, my dear boy, now I know the mystery! She has been here; she has told me all about it, and she insists on our paying her a visit by the seaside."

Bernard remonstrated, refused, abjured, but in the end he gave in for his mother's sake, and one day found them both by the seaside in a lovely house overlooking wooded cliffs and rocky promontory. Iona's uncle and aunt were the kindest, simplest people on the face of the earth. Her unworldliness, though not acquired, had been fostered by her adopted parents. The story of Bernard's party which she had told them, had made him a hero in their eyes, and as for the rest—

Perhaps the ending is commonplace; the falling in love of these two had been begun under strange circumstances, but the end was not quite so extraordinary as the beginning. Bernard was proud and would not give up his work, neither would he ask a rich woman to be his wife, but somehow or other the old people put their fingers into that pie, and Iona had to declare that Bernard should not leave off his work for her, but that she would live in London with him.

"One thing, Bernard, you shall give me. I am going to have that sovereign set as a brooch and wear it always. You see it was the price of my husband! Without that I should never have married you."

"Without it I should never have known what a woman's love means. My sweetest! You shall have it if you like, though I must say that it was the hardest money I ever earned in my life."

Iona would not let Bernard's mother live anywhere but with them. Their pretty little London house was a place where there was always sunshine. Every day Bernard went off to his work with a happy look on his face. He said that now he was too happy, and if any one suggested his giving up his post, he would answer:

"Why should I? Mr. Blackley can't do without me, my salary is excellent, and as any lucrative situation is difficult to obtain, I shall not lightly put myself out of work."

Mrs. Graves sometimes complains, but Mr. Samson never ceases to hold Bernard up as an example, and it is whispered that he means to make Bernard Graves his heir.

## "THE UNSEEN PRESENCE."

### CHAPTER I.

His people had never quite forgiven him. At first Nell had fretted a little, when she had learned to fully appreciate the enormity of the offence she had committed, when she, the little light-comedy actress, had promised to marry Leigh Ridout, of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in the North. It was true that he was only a younger son, but that did not count with his family, in regard to his relations with other less divinely favoured people than themselves. But after a time, when Nell learned to measure the worth of her husband from a purely outside point of view than that of his family connexions, she troubled no more.

How she herself had ever had the courage or audacity to marry that taciturn, sad-eyed artilleryman, Major Ridout, she, the merriest, most pleasure-loving of a gay, pleasure-loving set, she scarcely knew herself. She was as pretty, and winsome, and full of fun as a kitten.

Her own friends, while fully appreciating the worldly advantages of her marriage with a rich, well-born man, one of the smartest officers of one of the smartest branches of the service, still considered that she had thrown herself away.

Certainly, she changed a good deal after her marriage, though few could have defined in what the change consisted. She still had a laugh and a light word always ready, though the old careless, unthinking enjoyment no longer seemed to radiate from her like summer sunshine itself. She was a great favourite with her husband's brother officers and their wives, and in consequence led a gay and sociable life. Her husband had at one time almost entirely withdrawn himself from society, but he was only too happy to see her happy, and resignedly went out with her as much as she wished; a great deal too much, in the opinion of his family. They called her silly and frivolous.

She and Ridout had been married now nearly two years. It was the autumn. The summer had been unusually hot; almost too hot in the seaside garrison town where her husband was stationed. After the brilliant sunshine, the vivid skies, the white glare of cliff of that long summer, this grey, misty autumn evening was a rest and refreshing to Nell's tired frame and wearied brain. She drew in a long breath



as she came out of her house in the dusk of the evening twilight. It was about eight o'clock; there were few people passing. The lamps had been lit in the houses surrounding the square; they shone cheerfully—like the stars of the small worlds of home life which they lighted—through the misty air, suggesting the dear and familiar details of that simple everyday life which gathers about the hearths and homes of human beings. But that pale, soft sea-mist fell like a grey, impassable veil between her, as she stood on the steps of her own house, and those other lamp-lit homes, and seemed to shut her off from their beloved commonplaces of daily existence as with a vague, eerie mystery.

She stood for a moment, the look in her eyes which had come there a few moments before—when, on entering her husband's study after dinner, she had found that he had unexpectedly left it—still darkening them with its anguish of fear and questioning. No one ever saw that expression in them; it only came when she was alone. But during the past few months it had always been lurking there, though she had hidden it cleverly with her smiles and merry chatter. To-night, as she stood there, that fear seemed to have taken complete possession of her. Her face paled, her eyes gazed out through the mist stealing, gentle, intangible, suffocating, up about her, as if she felt in it some unspeakable horror of peril and evil.

A soldier, whistling the last new music-hall ditty, came down the hill from the Castle. The brisk, regular tramp of his feet, the lively air, roused her. She pulled to the door behind her, and went out to search for her husband. She made her way down to the sea. The first Mrs. Leigh Ridout—her husband had been a widower—would never have ventured upon such a thing; at that hour in the evening, too. She never ventured upon anything where her husband and his family were concerned. She was a wife of their own choosing. Birth, fortune, character had been eminently suitable, and his own people had practically made up the match. She never went into her husband's study when he wished to be quiet. She never dragged him out to ride and drive with her when he wished to remain at home. She never worried him to accompany her from one entertainment to another when he looked tired and depressed. Leigh Ridout's family considered that the present Mrs. Ridout treated him with a scandalous want of respect and sympathy.

Nell was thinking of that first wife now; she often thought of her. Her youngest sister-in-law, more garrulous, and with the need of talking freely more gracious, had enlightened her—rather more, perhaps, than she really knew—as to the ways, character, and habits of that favoured bride. She had been apparently a meek, nervous kind of girl, and had died about a year after her marriage. There had been painful circumstances attending her last illness and death, upon which even the garrulous sister-in-law kept a discreet and profound silence. But there was a niece—a bright, honest-eyed girl of sixteen, the daughter of Lady Gregory, the eldest sister—who, unsuspected by her family, had gathered up odds and ends of gossip repeated thoughtlessly before her by her nurses when she was a child, and which she had rattled off carelessly one day to the second Mrs. Leigh Ridout, on one of the few visits she had paid her husband's family.

"Aunt Annabel was frightened of Uncle Leigh. Are you frightened of him? I don't believe you are. I suppose that is what mother means when she says you have not the proper respect for your husband," with a mischievous laugh. "I shan't have any for mine, if it means being frightened out of your wits at him. Aunt Annabel took quite a dislike to poor Uncle Leigh before she died, and though he does look so sad and stern, he was awfully good to her. He's a dear, and if ever I find another man like him I shall marry him, and in spite of mother and Aunt Emma, make him 'take me round' like you do Uncle Leigh."

Nell had laughed, but the laugh had died away rather abruptly as she suddenly wondered how long that gay, light-hearted, happy girl would have borne the burden at which she hinted so unconsciously. Nell had been as light-hearted when she had first resolved upon making her husband share her life, and not live his own apart from her. Now, to-day, the effort seemed to have left her tired to death. And perhaps, after all, he had loved his first wife best; she asked herself that to-night. Sometimes she had been filled with dread lest she should alienate him from her by her conduct; then she had crushed self into the background again, and gone on doggedly in the path she had set her feet to travel. At all costs she would force him to live her life, not that dreary, isolated one of his own.

She met few people out at that hour of the autumn evening. As she left her house

she had caught a glimpse of an old woman leading a child. They were walking on the other side of the way. They were passing under a street lamp when she first saw them, and she noticed mechanically that the woman was a mulatto, and looked very old. She could not see the child's face.

She went on, forgetting all about them, till just as she was crossing the street to reach the Parade, she saw them again close behind her. An odd, unaccountable fancy struck her that they were following her; but it passed, as at that moment she thought she caught sight of her husband on the Parade. She hurried on to overtake him, and when she glanced back the woman and child had disappeared into the shadows of the autumn evening. The Parade at that end was deserted; there was no figure except that of her husband's in sight.

The sea lay still as a deep lake of enchanted water. A shaft of silver light from the rising moon pierced the heavy, misty air like the shining lance of some angel-spear, and striking the sea, touched where it fell the dark waters into radiance.

But Ridout, who had stopped and was looking out to sea, saw nothing of the growing light till his wife's hand touched him. Then he turned with a frowning start, and saw the moonlight shining on her face. Something dark lifted from his own as he recognised her.

"It was so close and suffocating indoors," she said, "so I came out for a walk. I found you had gone out, and as I knew you weren't going to Colonel Maple's till half-past nine, I thought I might find you here!"

She spoke lightly, still keeping her hand on his arm. He looked at her a little queerly, but he replied in the same matter-of-fact strain. Then he suggested they should stroll on to the end of the Parade. They walked on, leaving the town behind. And as they went together, the mist-laden air seemed to grow lighter and clearer. The moon rising higher, shone down in fuller radiance. A faint breeze sprang up and stirred the sullen surface of the sea, which broke into little ripples in the moonlight. They walked side by side, talking over some prospective changes that were to take place in his battery, and of the future arrangements they would have to make. But though she walked close to his side, she seemed to feel between them always that vague, impalpable shape of mystery, horrible because

of its very intangibility, which had walked between her and her husband ever since the day of their marriage. It seemed as if she had never felt it so strongly as she did to-night.

So keenly was she conscious of it, that once for an instant she actually fancied that she saw it take bodily shape in the twilight of the autumn evening. She started and swerved aside a step, as something—a shadow, a wreath of pale, chill mist—floated between them.

"What is it, Nell?" asked Ridout, glancing down at her.

She laughed, but still looked with a half-shrinking curiosity behind her.

The long Parade with its lights was silent and deserted. The shrill noisy scream of a steamer off the pier whistling for a pilot brought a sense of positive relief, as she found herself once more in a world of material and familiar things.

"It's nothing, Leigh," slipping her hand into his arm. "I always think there is something ghostly about the shadows and effects of autumn evenings. What a strange noise the sea seems to be making to-night as it breaks on the shingle! It's like whispering, threatening voices. Isn't it silly? I feel so fanciful to-night. Perhaps there is something wrong with me!" with a little half-hysterical laugh, and catching at her breath. "The long hot summer has tried me"—hastily—"I mean. I'm all right, dear, of course," as he stopped and scanned her face anxiously through the dark. "I dare say it was that book on fetish that I found in your study this afternoon. I opened it and read some of it, but the stories in it were so horrid that they made me creep!" with a half-mock, half-real shudder. "They put all sorts of ugly thoughts into one's brain, even to thinking that evil can triumph over good! It is so silly—and wicked." Then as he still looked at her with that strained intenseness, she tried to speak more lightly. "It is really too ridiculous to be so nonsensical! The stupid book must have taken possession of me!" And she laughingly told him of the mulatto woman and the child she had seen, and of the absurd fancy she had had for a moment about her.

"I wonder who she is. Somebody's nurse, I suppose. She seemed to take an interest in me, any way, for she looked hard at me when I first caught sight of her. Perhaps she didn't guess I was an old married woman, and did not think it

right of me to be walking out alone at this time of the evening."

She chattered on, more for the sake of speaking than for anything else. Any foolishness, any triviality, any absurdity, sufficed to make talk when she wished to rouse him from those sombre moods which she so dreaded. Whether she irritated, angered, disgusted him, she never cared. She never ceased till she saw the cloud lighten from his eyes, and she felt that once more she had driven back across the threshold of his soul that vague, intangible foe, whose horrible presence she could feel, though it took no definite shape. That her husband had a dark and unhappy secret in his life she divined. That this invisible shape of terror against which she was ever fighting was born of that secret, she divined too. That was all. She was not prepared for the effect her careless chatter aroused in him to-night. He stopped. They had reached the end of the Parade, and were strolling back. His face looked white and almost cruel in its set sternness.

"Nell, I wish you would understand, once for all, that I do not like you to walk alone after dark. It is not fit for you; it is not safe."

"Leigh," answering the look, the tone, rather than the words, "I——"

"I will not have it, Nell. I have told you before I did not—like it. It isn't right. I hate to feel that you are walking out alone, any time—and in the dark!——"

He broke off abruptly and walked on. She did not say another word. His face was pale and rigid with that set resolve of purpose. Hers was white, too, with a bewilderment of pain.

As they entered the house, his eyes fell on her, and he noticed her pallor in the lamplight. The frozen sternness of his face softened, and a rush of passionate tenderness swept over it.

"My dear! How tired you look!" he exclaimed. She turned quickly aside and entered the drawing-room. He followed, suddenly realising how harsh his manner and words must have seemed to her. "Good Heavens!" he said under his breath. Then closing the door, he went up to her, as she stood slowly pulling off her gloves with that frightened, stricken look in her face. "Nell!" he began hoarsely.

She looked up at him, and saw his heart in his eyes. The hot blood flamed into

her face, and the ugly doubt that had chilled her own heart was swept away in the rush of thankful happiness.

"Leigh, I know it isn't so, but just let me hear it with your own lips, and I'll never doubt you again. I don't doubt you now, only it is so nice to hear you say that you, Leigh—— It isn't because you think that it is not fitting for the wife of a Ridout to walk about in the dark, but because you love me, and don't want any harm to happen to me, your wife! Not that you are afraid I should lower the dignity and upset the proprieties of the family of Ridout!" with a happy laugh, which yet had the faintest little sob in it.

He caught her in his arms and kissed her.

"Hang the family of Ridout!" he said, with a hoarse laugh.

#### CHAPTER II.

It was a fortnight later; the hardest fortnight that Nell had gone through since she had first discovered that her husband was haunted. For that was how she whispered it to herself. Hitherto she had always succeeded in rousing him from one of those dark moods when they took possession of him. This time she failed. He was abstracted, taciturn; he seemed even to go about his work mechanically; he was a soldier to the backbone, and hitherto had taken a keen interest in his duties. He seemed, too, to have a positive dislike to her going outside the house, and if she went, would not allow her to go alone. All her efforts to drive that sombre look from his eyes were vain. She felt vaguely that her invisible foe was gaining ground. She struggled desperately against it. She was really feeling ill, and this last valiant effort to combat the dark spirit which seemed to enter into her husband, and still more its failure, exhausted her completely.

He saw her growing paler and more delicate-looking, and the misery in his own heart increased tenfold.

One evening she went up to bed early; she pulled aside the blind of her window to look out. A brilliant moon was shining. As its light flooded the square, it gave an unnatural silvery whiteness to the ground. An old woman leading a child was crossing the square, going down towards the sea. Their figures stood out clear and almost startlingly distinct against the surrounding brilliance of whiteness. Their backs were

turned to her, but something in their appearance made her think of the mulatto woman and the child she had noticed that evening a fortnight ago. She had not seen them since. She dropped the blind, too tired to feel any interest in them, or, indeed, anything else. She fell asleep almost as soon as her head touched the pillows. She slept on in dreamless, refreshing slumber for some hours. Then she began to awake. The remembrance of the woman and child who had caught her passing attention before going to rest, returned to her half-conscious brain. They seemed now to pass into her dreams. They were standing at the foot of her bed looking at her. Their persistent presence began to worry her. It irritated her at last so much in her dream that she sat up to tell her husband to drive them away. The action awakened her completely, and she saw that her husband was not by her side. The clock at the same moment struck out two. She sprang out of bed, flung a dressing gown round her, and hastened downstairs.

The house was dark and silent. But from under the door of her husband's study gleamed a ray of light. He was there. For a second she clung to the baluster for support, then hastened on. She listened outside the door; she fancied she caught a faint sound—was it a sob of a man's mortal anguish? She tried the handle of the door. It was locked. She called her husband by his name, first with an effort at calmness; after a pause, during which there was no sound or stir, as if the person inside the room sat arrested by the shock of her unexpected presence—with the whole anguish of her own heart and brain in the low cry.

Then her husband came and opened to her. She caught at him, and after another of those strained pauses, when it seemed as if the very blood in his veins were arrested, and that the eternal coldness and stillness of death were already upon him, he took her in his arms and carried her over to his writing-table, where he sat down, still gathering her to his breast.

He had been writing, but his work was finished. One or two letters lay on the table, one addressed to her. She raised her head from his shoulder, where she had hidden it in the first moment, like a child beside itself in a paroxysm of fear, and saw the letter. A newspaper, hastily flung on the table as he rose to let her in, lay near it. With every sense a hundredfold sharpened

by her pain and terror, she had, while she waited outside the door for him to open to her, caught the sound of the faint, hurried rustling of the paper. She glanced from the letter to it. Then, before he could stop her, she swept the paper aside. A revolver lay under it, and the nameless foe against which she had fought so long on her husband's side took tangible, material shape at last. Her husband was a would-be suicide. Before its horror she uttered a low moan, and flinging her arms round his neck, she broke into crying, sobbing out half-choked questions, entreaties, reproaches. He sat stricken dumb before her anguish, but the sullen look of determination and suffering did not lighten from his eyes.

He held her close, and the suffering deepened in his face, as his heart seemed wrung to breaking. But he was fixed in his resolve. He had fought bravely, doggedly, even desperately all these years against the Nemesis, human, ghostly, devilish—whatever it was—that had been slowly tracking him down to this. He would make an end now. For himself he did not care. It was for her, his beloved, whom he was holding, as she sobbed out her love and her anguish, to his heart. The curse should not fall on her if his death could avert it, if his sacrifice could appease the fiend who tormented him. He only wondered now why he had not done it long ago. That wretched yellow woman's curse had worked well. His best friend had turned from him and met a violent death; his most faithful servant, the man who had since his boyhood followed his fortunes, had learned to mistrust and hate him. The wife he had married—that poor little wife to whom he had been as kind as he knew how to be, though he had never loved her—had taken a horror of him, and had died in an attack of melancholia by her own hand, and the child she had borne had faded away too. It may have been only a hideous chain of coincidences, but it had been. And no man in whose life they had taken place should have committed this last unpardonable sin of all—that of taking this tender, loving, innocent woman, this wife whom he loved better than his own soul, into his blasted life. For the curse would fall on her too. "On all whom you love, on all whom you trust. Those you love shall turn from you in hate and fear; those whom you trust shall deceive you; those for whom you would give your heart's life shall die before your eyes. And you shall



know that it is the curse working, for the sake of the heart you have broken here." He could see the old woman now, the grandmother of the girl he had ruined and then cast off—cast off because, though she was beautiful as any woman of his own country and race, she had black blood in her veins, and came of a stock too low to mingle with the family of Ridout. Though she loved him, he had flung her aside, and driven her to her death, for she had killed herself in her despair.

It was years ago, but he could see the woman who had avenged her, now, standing as she stood that evening in the moonlight, on the verandah of the West Indian home which for a year had been an earthly paradise to him and the girl who had trusted him and whom he had betrayed. And the woman had cursed him and gone away. She was dead, and the child was dead, and its mother was dead by her own hand. Without doubt it seemed. He had made enquiries when he found that the curse was actually and horribly working itself out in his life. He had never seen any of them again. But as sure as he was a living man he had felt the presence of that something, creature or fiend, who had haunted him to his ceaseless tormenting over and over again. It, whatever it was, had almost driven him to madness, crime, suicide, suggesting nameless evils to his brain, and despair to his heart. But though he himself had never again seen with physical sight that embodied curse, others had; all those whom he had best loved and trusted. They had learned to hate him, and had died. And it took always one shape, an old mulatto woman leading a child by the hand. And this—his heart's beloved, his wife—had seen them at last too; and her love would turn into hatred—and perhaps she would die. He could bear it no more. He would die in her place; perhaps then the curse might end too.

"It is what that creature—monster, devil, living or dead—what it is, I cannot say—has been goading me into doing all these years. But I have held out; I felt I should be a coward to yield to its tempting and tormenting. And since I have been married to you, it has redoubled its efforts. Over and over again, but for you helping and comforting me, I should have given in. So long as you were safe from that awful influence, I could bear it. Now you have seen—too—and—I can bear no more."

She forced the story from him at last.

She uttered no word of condemnation. For explanation she had none to give. It might have been but a morbid fancy, born of the remorse of an over-sensitive soul for a great crime. It might have been the magnetic outside influence of a cruel, unscrupulous will on an imaginative brain and highly-strung nervous organisation. It might have been coincidence. It might have been some malignant unknown horror of spiritual evil. She did not know. She did not care, at this supreme moment. Only he must be saved. She clung to him, her tears wetting his cheek, her lips pressing close to his, her arms round his neck, her heart beating against his. She claimed him as her own. She defied any foe, living, dead, or devilish, to take him from her. She told him how she had fought all silently and secretly by his side. And then she used the last weapon in her armoury.

"Not for my sake only you must live, not even for your own, but for—" and she whispered something into his ear.

Something that made him utter a hoarse exclamation and catch her still closer to his breast, and then there was silence. When he at last raised his head, there was a new look in his eyes, and his cheek was wet, no longer with her tears alone.

A little later a child was born into their home.

Now whether the sweet, wholesome influence of that child life worked a marvel, as most child life does in the hearts and minds of mankind, or whether his wife's will, strong in her faithful love, strengthened his, or whether he had gathered up his own manhood, and in one mighty effort flung off once for all the morbid fancy—or malignant, unholy spell—cannot be said. Perhaps they all had something to do with it. It was certain that the woman and child were never seen again by any of those whom he loved, and who loved him, nor was that baleful presence ever felt again between Nell and her husband. It would not be surprising if the living child in his home had the greater share in the new and wholesome order of things, for it worked such marvels in the great family of Ridout that it may well have performed a miracle in that other matter.

It was promptly adopted and adored by uncles, aunts, and cousins, and led by its tiny feet, drawn by its tiny hands, Nell, as its mother, found herself at last gathered into the family as one of its own flesh and blood. Once across the threshold, her own sweetness and loveableness did the rest, and

the family secretly regretted having barricaded itself against her so long.

But perhaps only her husband ever knew the extent of the blessing she had brought upon the life of one member of it.

### "TO-MORROW WILL BE FRIDAY."

PURFORD would be a mere, ordinary, commonplace little country town but for one thing; that is the old Priory. People of an antiquarian turn of mind drive any number of miles to visit it, and as this naturally brings a certain amount of grist to the mill, Purfordites are not wanting in pride and proper feeling towards this noble relic of the Gothic style, though the fact that it was originally founded by Papists is rather a bitter pill to some of the narrower-minded.

In spite of the ruined condition into which it has been allowed to fall—so that only a very small portion of the wonderfully groined roof of the chapel remains for disciples of the beautiful to rave about—it is still possible to mentally reconstruct the entire fabric, and populate it with either a sombre, stealthy-footed, black-robed order of religious recluses, or a jovial, rotund, shaven-pated community of ecclesiastical gourmands, according to taste.

Besides its own intrinsic merits, the Priory possesses the additional advantage of a situation in an extensive and well-wooded park which, encompassing it on three sides, forms an incomparable setting to the scene. An undulating expanse of green sward, broken here and there by magnificent chestnuts, lies between the antique gateway which opens on an unfrequented offshoot of the one wide, rambling, uphill street of which Purford consists, and the front of the old building.

It was about the last week in September that two young men—who are sufficiently designated by the names of Ted and Jack—tramped their way into the town. It was just that time in the afternoon when Purford seems to have the most difficulty in keeping its eyes open, and the pair having disinterred and interviewed one or two drowsy inhabitants on the subject of lodgings, were finally recommended to Mrs. Cuttle at the corndealer's, next door but two from the post-office.

Everything, terms included, having proved entirely satisfactory, the two friends soon found themselves partaking of a composite

meal in the apartment which boasted an outlook over the High Street.

"I think we can manage to put in a day or two here very comfortably," remarked Jack, who was big, and fair, and indolent-looking. "Such a jolly, sleepy-looking little one-horse place! And the Priory! You're cracked on the subject of old ruins, and I reckoned on this keeping you quiet for the next day or two."

The other rose at the bait.

So they sallied forth. Five minutes was sufficient to bring them to the Priory gates, which were closed every night at dusk. As they were about to enter, Ted's attention was caught by a breach in the wall some twenty or thirty feet to the right.

"No great difficulty there in making your way in or out after the regulation hours," he observed, measuring the distance from the ground with his eye.

The beauty of the day was over. Great shadows lay across the fresh green turf; shadows that seemed to be cast less by the setting sun than by the spirit of solitude and mystery brooding over the ruin.

"Good old Priory!" remarked Jack patronisingly. "Those old monks had their lines cast in pleasant places. Shouldn't half have minded being a monk myself so long as there was none of the hair shirt or bread and water business. Ha, ha, ha!"

He laughed a hearty, deep-toned laugh which roused strange echoes in the deserted cloisters, as though the sound had been taken up and passed on by invisible lips until it died away among the mutilated columns and arches.

The cloisters lay to the left; on the right were the sacristy and chapter-house. These, with the refectory and the remains of offices and dormitories, constituted the main portion of the ancient ecclesiastical edifice. The chapel was a distinct building. Entering by the west doorway the visitors made their way along the nave, looking up, as they did, at that remnant of the exquisitely sculptured roof which time, the barbarian, had consented to spare. The great east window would have been a blank empty space but for the ivy which did its best to provide a substitute for the stained glass that had once filled it. Ivy, too, rollicked round what remained of the massive columns.

But it was already getting dusk, and, as they turned to go, they encountered on the threshold an ancient crone, in a lavender sun-bonnet, armed with a symbolic bunch of great rusty keys.

"Askin' yer parding, sirs, but time's up," she cackled. "I've bin out in the little bit o' kitching garding at the back, and never knowed as there was nobody about till jist this minnit, or I'd a' come and showed yer round."

They thanked her, but explained that they had managed very well.

"Ah, but yer wanted me to pint out and 'splain things, and I'd a' done it willin'. Lawk-a-mussy," she continued, "it's lucky as I didn't go off and lock yer in unbeknown! What would yer a' done then?"

"Stayed here until you came and let us out in the morning," hazarded Ted.

The puckered, leather-like visage lengthened, and she shook her head ominously.

"Ah, yer be strangers," she said, looking them up and down. "Strangers yer must be, or yer'd never talk like that, and on a Friday of all days in the week."

"I wonder what she means?" asked Ted as they followed her out.

"You come 'ere termorrer," she said, "and I'll show yer all there is to be seen, and tell yer what'll make yer blood cuddle."

Having secured the entrance by the means of a key containing metal enough to set up a dealer in old iron, she dropped a rheumatic curtsey and bade them "good day."

"Now, then," said Ted, as soon as she was out of sight, leading the way as he spoke to the breach in the wall, "there's nobody about, and I don't know what you mean to do, but I'm going over here."

The other followed, and they skirted the ruins and plunged into the dense, dark recesses of the wood beyond. Threading their way between the trunks, they continued for some time until they arrived at what was like a wood within a wood—a square, shallow, regular depression of the ground, like a dry tank, in which the trees grew so closely together that they shut out what was left of the daylight.

There was something eerie in the spot, something that defied analysis, and descended upon the senses like a pall.

"Rum sort of place," remarked Jack, with a shake as though to rid himself of the strange influence of the spot. "Just look at those trees with their naked knotted trunks, and roots that seem to writhe and crawl like snakes!"

Ted set his teeth hard to ward off the foolish, shuddery kind of feeling that came over him.

"What humbug you talk! Judging by the shape and size and general appearance

I should say this was originally the fishpond belonging to the Priory. Nearly every place of the sort had its own private resources on which to draw for the regulation fish diet that was an article of religion in those days."

Half in bravado, half for the sake of the reassurance to be gained by the sound of his own voice, Jack lifted his to the tune of "To-morrow will be Friday," when as a mere matter of fact it would be Saturday. From a musical point of view, the effect was not good. The voice sounded harsh and unnatural, and seemed to rouse queer murmurs and complainings among the trees, as though the leaves were trying to whisper their secrets in the dull ears of the two mortals who had intruded on their dusky solitude.

"Stop that awful croaking," his friend hissed in his ear as he made a half-hearted and wholly out of tune attack upon the chorus. "Shut up, can't you! There's some one watching us over there."

The singer came to a sudden stop, the last note strangled in his throat.

"Where? Who?" he asked.

"Over yonder," indicating a point between the trees, a little to the left.

The branch of a tree knocked Ted's hat off at this moment. As he rose from groping after it his companion touched him on the arm.

"It's so beastly dark among these trees one can't be sure of anything," he grumbled in an undertone, "but I certainly did think I caught the flutter of a gown or something on ahead. Thank goodness we're coming to open ground at last. There! What did I tell you?"

He pointed to a comparatively clear space that lay between them and the Priory, and over which a dark, swiftly-moving figure could be distinguished passing.

"I should just like to know how she came here!" he added.

"She?" repeated the other vaguely.

"Why, you said so yourself in the first place, didn't you? Besides, look at the gown, and the hood drawn over the head. What else can it be but a woman?"

"Monks wore gowns," said Ted slowly and abstractedly, "and sometimes pulled their cowl over their heads."

"Why—what in the name——" began Jack, when he felt himself gripped suddenly by the arm.

"See, it has disappeared by the door leading into the cloisters! Let us follow, and try and find out what it means."

Borne along by the influence of the stronger will, the other allowed himself to be led in a direction totally opposed to the one in which his own inclinations pointed. To all appearances the cloisters were deserted, and the silence unbroken, save by their own footsteps, which sounded hollow in their ears. They had traversed nearly two sides of the quadrangle, when something glided out from behind a column a few paces distant. There was the straight black gown with the hood concealing the face, together with hanging sleeves that hid the hands. A slight rattling noise accompanied it.

The two men clutched each other and waited. At first it seemed to be approaching them, then, turning sharply off at right angles, it crossed the cloister and was lost—swallowed up. Was there a secret door? Had the wall opened to receive it? Had their eyes deceived them all along? Whatever might be the explanation, neither was in the mood for further investigations.

"Come!" one breathed in the other's ear; and without any exhibition of indecent haste, but still holding on to each other as though there was satisfaction in the actual contact of flesh and blood with flesh and blood, they left the ruin.

Not until they reached the breach in the wall did another word fall from the lips of either. Then:

"We both saw it?" said Jack questioningly.

An indefinite sound intended to signify assent answered him.

"And we were both sober, and wide awake, and in the full possession of our faculties?"

But Ted had commenced to scale the wall, and was, besides, unprepared with any answer to the enigma.

"I've always looked upon such tales as unmitigated rot," Jack continued; "but I can't help admitting that there is something very unaccountable in— Great Scott!"

A sudden dislodgement of bricks, a rattle and a crash, and his friend was precipitated at his feet with an unexpectedness that might well account for the expletive.

"Just what I said. Bet you anything you like you've done for yourself as far as your clothes are concerned."

The other made an attempt to rise, but fell back with a sharp exclamation.

"I don't know how my garments may have fared, but I'm pretty certain I've sprained my ankle."

A nice state of affairs, truly! Here was

a high, albeit a half-ruined wall, and here was a disabled man on the wrong side of the same. Moreover, it was getting late, and darker every moment. With the aid of his friend, Ted made another attempt to surmount the difficulty; but the result was as futile as it was painful.

"What on earth's to be done?" asked Jack in despairing perplexity.

"There is only one thing. You must hunt up the old woman, and bribe her to come and let me out."

"But I don't know where she lives."

"Find out. I expect the first person you meet will be able to tell you."

"Well, I suppose there's no other way. I say, though"—his mind, which had been temporarily diverted by the accident, returning to the subject of their recent mysterious experience—"I don't half like leaving you here under the circumstances; and I may be gone some time."

"Blow the circumstances," from the sufferer. "My ankle's beginning to hurt so confoundedly I don't care a rap for anything else."

So Jack departed by way of the wall, which he climbed with an infinite regard for the integrity of his own valuable limbs.

Before leaving he assisted his friend to hobble a little distance and put himself into a more comfortable position, with his back against the trunk of the nearest tree.

"I needn't tell you not to move," were his last words.

As predicted, he found no difficulty in discovering the domicile of the old caretaker. She rejoiced in the name of Martha Beadle, and occupied one of a row of little tumbledown cottages just off the main street. In fact, ten minutes would have been sufficient to have brought her to the rescue had she been at home. Unfortunately it appeared, on the testimony of a neighbour, that she had just "stepped out." No reliable evidence being forthcoming as to the precise direction in which she had stepped, there was nothing for it but to hang about until she should think good to step back.

The minutes fretted away, the quarters chimed from the church clock, and still she tarried. The situation was getting desperate when it occurred to the weary waiter that though Mrs. Beadle herself was not at home, the keys might be. She would hardly be likely to carry that heavy, cumbersome bunch about with her.

Coolly unlatching the door, he entered. All was in darkness, but the introduction of



a wax match upon the scene showed the keys hanging on a nail close at hand. He unhooked them, and at once "made tracks" for the Priory.

There was a little delay caused by his having to try all the keys to find the right one. Then there was some difficulty in getting it to act. Either his hand shook, or the key, recognising an unfamiliar grasp, refused to respond. But at last it gave way.

It was very dark inside, but he succeeded in making out the tree beneath which he had left his friend.

"Ted," he cried, as he approached, "here I am at last. I've been no end of a time, and I expect you thought I was never coming, but—I say, where are you? Why don't you answer?"

He quickened his steps almost to a run.

"Ted!" he shouted again. Still no reply. A sudden chill fell upon him. Putting out his hand, he touched the tree. There was no one there!

To return to the other.

After his companion left him the pain in his ankle, at first acute, gradually lessened.

"Perhaps I haven't sprained it so badly after all," he thought. "What a nuisance it is, anyhow! Well, it's no use crying over spilt milk, and as Jack may have some trouble in hunting up the old woman, I may as well make myself as comfortable as I can in the meanwhile."

He leant his head against the gnarled old trunk, and closed his eyes. The darkness and mysterious quietude of the spot must have lulled him to rest. At any rate, at the end of an indefinite interval he started up bewildered.

"Where am I? What's up? Who's that?"

Some one had just passed close by him—a black, dimly-outlined figure, whose movements were, as before, accompanied by a faint rattling sound, like that which might be made by a rosary as it swung to and fro. The sound, slight though it was, recalled everything.

"The monk again," he whispered. "But for my ankle I'd follow and see——"

A sudden recklessness seized him.

"It hardly hurts at all now. I'll try if I can stand."

Slowly and cautiously he raised himself upon his feet, and steadying himself against the tree, tried to pierce the gloom, but could discern nothing. Stay—what was that? Could it be?—yes, there was a light in the

ruins, flickering and uncertain, but a light all the same.

"I'll find out what it means if I die for it," was his rash resolve.

So with the aid of his stick he crept across the thick turf, hardly conscious of pain or weakness in the half fearful, wholly absorbing interest that lured him on. What was that sound, too, monotonous and regular, like a pick or some sharp instrument striking upon stone?

They were at work in the cloisters, at work by the light of torches, which threw their lurid, wayward gleams upon a group of dark monastic forms. They were hewing out a chamber in the wall, a chamber in which a man might barely stand upright.

Blood-red reflections were thrown on mouldering arch and crumbling column, and made crimson splashes on the worn stone pavement.

An owl hooted among the ruins; instantly the work ceased.

"Is it a dream?" the watcher asked himself, as he lurked in the shadow of a doorway.

The owl hooted again, and from out the gloomiest recesses of the cloisters another group appeared; a group composed of two figures leading—dragging—a third, this third being the only one of all the weird assembly that had the face exposed. Such an awful, ghastly face, with the eyes of one doomed, soul and body!

Arrived at the entrance of the living tomb, the victim gave one wild, agonised look round—a look which burnt itself into the memory of the witness.

The owl hooted for the third time, the torches flared redly for an instant, then flickered low and died in darkness, and there was only the moon shining down upon the desolate, deserted cloisters. The sound of a fall was followed by silence, deep and unbroken.

"It was a lucky thing I thought of the cloisters," remarked Jack next day, "and it was equally lucky I happened to have a drop of brandy in my travelling-flask. As it was, it gave me no end of a shock when I tumbled over you in the dark. And you haven't done your ankle any good either. Doctor says you may think yourself lucky if you're able to stand on it by the end of next week. A nice sort of finish to our walking tour! As to that little tableau vivant you declare you were eye-witness of, I can't quite swallow that. I fancy the pain in your ankle must have affected your head, and

the scene, and the hour, and the associations, and all the stories you'd heard about the place, jumbled themselves up together in your brain and produced the highly sensational result you describe. Anyhow, I should think, one way and another, you've had about enough of the Priory."

"You might a' knocked me down with a feather when I come back and found them keys gone."

The speaker was Mrs. Beadle, the period a week later, and the scene the ruined cloisters.

"I declare, if I didn't think as it must be the Black Prior 'isself as 'ad walked 'em off. You've 'eared on 'im? No! Well, fack is it ain't gen'rally spoke of for fear o' givin' the place a bad name, though it's all right so long as yer don't get pokin' round arter dark and sprainin' yer ankle and sich like."

This was a dig at that one of her audience whose mode of progression was aided and abetted by a couple of sticks.

"Owsomever, that's neither 'ere nor there. But about this 'ere Prior. 'Undreds o' years ago he lived and died, and d'yer think he can lie quiet? Not if he knows it, pertickler of a Friday."

"And why Friday more than any other day?"

"Well, yer see he was a reg'lar bad 'un, and there was another monk as he had a spite agen. So what's he do but comes be'ind 'im as he were a-settin' there by the pond over yonder a-catchin' fish for 'is Friday's dinner, and, takin' 'im unawares like, tumbles 'im in 'ead over 'eels and drownds 'im."

"But the pond wasn't deep enough."

"I don't know nothink about that, that's 'ow it were told me, and if you don't like it——"

"Oh, go on, go on."

"Well, the other monks they finds it out, and what does they do? They takes 'im, meanin' the Prior, and builds 'im up alive in this very wall—as it might be 'ere," indicating a portion of the masonry.

"But have you ever seen or heard anything?"

"Times and agen I've fancied I've 'eared groans when I bin passin' 'bout dusk, and I don't doubt as he did groan powerful long at the time, and 'oller too. As to seein' anythink, maybe I 'ave and maybe I 'aven't. Any'ow, I promised to cuddle yer blood, and 'tain't my fault if I ain't bin and done it."

## AN AUTUMN MANŒUVRE.

It is now nearly a year since the occurrence of the events which I am about to narrate as a warning to susceptible bachelors. May others profit by my misfortune, and take to heart the moral which he who runs may read in the following truthful record of my discomfiture!

My name is Jasper Dodderley, my residence is in the famous old cathedral town of Hilminster, and by profession I am a solicitor. I was always remarkable for my gallantry and devotion to the fair sex; but I distributed my homage amongst them with the strictest impartiality. The truth is, I loved them all as a body too much to forfeit my bachelor's privilege of flirting at large, or, in other words, I was too much of a ladies' man ever willingly to become a lady's man.

In this way, always skirmishing, but never allowing myself to be drawn into a regular engagement, when my thirty-fifth birthday arrived it found me still a free man. I forgot the proverb about pitchers which go too often to the well, and certainly never for a moment imagined that the days of my celibacy were already numbered. Yet such was indeed the case, though no foreboding of what was in store for me disturbed my mind when, in the August of that year, I started for Codlington, the well-known East Coast watering-place, where I had decided to spend my autumn holidays.

Now, Codlington, although it is a fashionable resort, is not a remarkably lively town. It is not good for man to be alone—especially at a watering-place; without a flirtation, life at the seaside is like a salad without dressing. Luckily, at a watering-place, those who wish to flirt seldom experience much difficulty in gratifying their taste, and I quickly discovered the companion I sought in the person of a dashing Irish widow who was staying in the same hotel, and sat next to me at table d'hôte. Her name was Mrs. Daly, and though she was no longer in her first youth, she was emphatically what is termed "a fine woman"—tall, stout, and handsome. Then, she dressed well, her conversation was amusing, and she spoke with a slight touch of the brogue which I found singularly fascinating; so that from the first I was attracted by her, and blessed the chance which had made me her neighbour. Naturally I took full advantage of

my position, and we were soon on excellent terms, which became really cordial when, in the course of our conversation, I discovered that she had friends in Hilminster, and that I was not unknown to her by repute.

From that moment we no longer felt like strangers, and I was delighted to hear that she, like myself, intended to stay at Codlington until the end of September. It was long since I had met any one who had made such a favourable first impression on me, and when dinner came to an end and we separated, I, for one, was resolved to cultivate the acquaintance assiduously during the next six weeks.

Let me condense into a paragraph the events of the next month, which was remarkable for nothing but the rapid progress of our intimacy. From the first we were constantly thrown together, meeting frequently on the promenade or in the hotel grounds, and regularly every night at dinner, for although, as other guests left, we gravitated steadily to the top of the table, we moved up together and remained neighbours. Thus a week passed away, and then, one evening, Mrs. Daly invited me to take my coffee in her sitting-room, where we spent a pleasant hour by the open window, while her companion—a prim, withered little spinster, whom Mrs. Daly called her “sheep-dog,” but who, by the side of her large patroness, resembled nothing so much as a toy terrier—sat silent in the background, working nameless monstrosities in wools. A few evenings later the invitation was repeated, and before long I got into a regular habit of “dropping in” after dinner for a little conversation and music.

By this time, of course, our friendship was established on a most familiar footing, and our flirtation was approaching the borders of a more tender feeling. For once my prudence had deserted me, and I was rapidly drifting into a serious entanglement, when I suddenly awakened to a sense of my situation. Well do I remember the moment of the discovery! I was singing our favourite piece—a tender little love-song, composed by me in a moment of inspiration after a shilling sail, and set to music of her own by Mrs. Daly—and I was rendering the first verse with even more than my usual feeling:

The bounding main I do not love,  
It bounds too much for me;  
Nor do I like the free blue waves,  
I find them far too free;  
Yet o'er the ocean would I fly  
To thee, my love, to thee.

As I finished our eyes met, and in hers I seemed to read the question, “Would you?” Like a revelation it burst upon me that that was just the question I should have asked myself long ago. Would I? Was I prepared to embark upon the stormy sea of matrimony for the sake of Mrs. Daly? If not, had I the courage to cut short my stay at Codlington and part abruptly from her, possibly never to meet her again? For that was the only alternative. At the point I had reached, to stand still was impossible. I must either go on or go back.

My choice was soon made. I liked Mrs. Daly much, but I loved liberty more. Therefore I decided to retire from Codlington while yet there was time. I would pretend that business required my presence at home, sacrifice the last fortnight of my holiday, bid her a cordial farewell—and do my best to forget that I had ever met her. But it behoved me to act with promptitude; in my situation every day had its dangers. I resolved to quit Codlington on the following Monday, and throughout the three intervening days—it was then a Thursday—to observe all circumspection and to see as little of her as was possible, while taking care not to excite her suspicions by any marked avoidance of her.

Unfortunately it is difficult to avoid people in a town like Codlington, where the road to everywhere lies along “the front,” and almost the first person I met, as I was strolling down the promenade the following afternoon, was Mrs. Daly. Of course I had to stop to speak to her; but after a few minutes I remembered my prudent resolutions and prepared to pass on, pleading the first excuse that came to hand.

“It is such a beautiful afternoon,” I said, “that I am going for an hour’s row.”

“Really!” she cried. “Can you row, then, Mr. Dodderley?”

“Oh, yes!” I answered, not caring to confess that all my boating had been done on the sluggish waters of the Hilminster Canal, and that it was years since I had had an oar in my hand.

“How strange you never told me before!” she gushed. “Why, there’s nothing I like better, and yet I haven’t been out once this year.”

What could I do but place myself at her disposal then and there? And as she consented after some slight hesitation, we soon found ourselves stepping into a corpulent tub, almost as broad as she was long, which the boat-hirer, after glancing

critically at my companion's proportions, declared was "just the thing to suit us."

At first we got on better than I had anticipated. A strong breeze was blowing off shore, and the tide was running out, so that, in spite of the clumsy oars and my somewhat erratic style, we made fairly rapid progress, and I quickly gained the confidence in my own powers which, I must admit, had been lacking at the beginning. So I pulled gaily on until the shore was almost lost to view, listening with a complacent smile to Mrs. Daly's compliments on my dexterity.

"I'm sorry I didn't know you cared for this kind of thing," I remarked at last. "If you had only told me I'd have placed my humble abilities at your command long ago. As it is," I continued, with a sigh, "this first pleasant excursion must, I fear, also be our last."

"Do you think the fine weather is going to break up, then?" she enquired.

"No, not that," I replied sadly, "but I regret to say our pleasant party must break up soon. Most important business calls me back to Hilminster, and I must tear myself away from here by next Monday at the latest."

Mrs. Daly looked thoughtful, but she only answered:

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes," I went on, tugging savagely at the oars to signify my annoyance; "it's a terrible nuisance, but it can't be helped. Business must be attended to. I can't tell you how much I am upset——"

Even as the words left my lips, Fate played a most unkind jest upon me and upset me literally, my right oar unaccountably missing the water and flying out of my hand, while I tumbled heels over head into the bows. For nearly thirty seconds I lay there half-dazed, then I picked myself up slowly and laughed a foolish laugh.

"That's what we boating men call catching a crab, Mrs. Daly," I explained, trying to look as if I had done it on purpose, and felt pleased to see how well I had succeeded. "I thought perhaps it might amuse you to see how it's done."

"It was good of you to take the trouble," she answered drily, "but don't you think it's time to turn back?"

Alas! that was more easily said than done. My right oar was already out of reach, and though I made heroic efforts with the only one left me, we drifted farther and farther away from it. And then I awoke to the seriousness of our

situation. With only one oar, I, who knew nothing about sculling, was called upon to propel a heavy tub—to say nothing of the heavy lady in it—against wind and tide for several miles! Which was absurd, as Euclid has it. But Mrs. Daly was too much alarmed to listen to reason. With bitter reproaches and tears, she insisted on my labouring to extricate her from the position in which I had placed her by my clumsiness—such was her harsh expression—and, changing seats with me, watched me like an Egyptian taskmistress while I plied my ineffectual scull at the stern. Pitilessly she eyed me, and whenever she detected the slightest sign of flagging, urged me to renewed exertions until night fell, and, far, far away, the lights of Codrington shone out. By that time, despite my strenuous exertions, we had been carried far out to sea, and at last even Mrs. Daly acknowledged that I was taxing myself in vain, and allowed me to rest from my bootless toil. But I only exchanged one form of exertion for another. For the rest of the night I had to act as a kind of animated fog horn, yelling my loudest at intervals of two minutes, and occasionally lighting wax vestas which were promptly blown out by the wind, and in no case could have been seen by a boat more than two or three yards away. But in this line also I was doomed to be a failure, for I had shouted myself hoarse, and Mrs. Daly was beginning to show symptoms of hysterics, when suddenly the welcome sound of an answering hail floated over the water towards us, and immediately afterwards the dark outline of a fishing-smack loomed up close by. A few words sufficed to explain our predicament, and then a hoarse voice—but oh, how sweet to us!—bellowed the order, "Throw us yer painter," complying with which request we soon found ourselves towed rapidly through the water towards Codrington, where, however, as the wind was against the smack, we did not arrive until nearly two hours later; so that it was almost morning when we knocked up the night porter of our hotel, and separated to seek the food and rest we were so much in need of.

I remained in bed all the next day, contenting myself with sending a message to ask how Mrs. Daly felt after the exposure; she also remained in bed all the next day, contenting herself with replying to my message that she was as well as could be expected. On the following morning, feeling much better, I rose about midday,



and having breakfasted, proceeded to Mrs. Daly's sitting-room to make my enquiries in person, a waiter whom I had sent up to ask the question having brought me the intimation that she would be graciously pleased to receive me. Not without trepidation did I knock at her door, and the moment I entered the room I perceived that either she had not yet forgiven me for our recent misadventure, or that something else had seriously upset her.

"Oh, Mr. Dodderley! she cried distractedly, paying no heed to my morning greeting, "you don't mean to say you haven't gone yet?"

"Gone!" I repeated in some surprise. "Of course not. Monday was the day I named, and this is only Sunday."

"I know, I know. But I hoped—oh, I did hope—that something might have made a still earlier departure necessary."

This was far from flattering, and I felt annoyed. Although I had deemed it prudent to part from her, I had expected—I may say, hoped—to be regretted. According to my calculations she ought to have been grieved to hear that circumstances had obliged me to curtail my holiday, yet here she was actually hinting that I had not gone soon enough!

"Madam," I said stiffly, "I regret if my presence, by reminding you of our late experience, offends you in any way. But since you seem to wish it, I can start this afternoon——"

"No, no, you misunderstand me sadly. It is not that. I merely thought that if something had happened to call you away last night or early this morning, it might have been better for you and have saved much—much unpleasantness."

"Better for me! how?" I asked uneasily. "Unpleasantness! of what description?"

"The truth is, Mr. Dodderley," she began, blushing and looking down, "my brother arrived here unexpectedly last night, and somebody has given him a garbled—a scandalously garbled—account of our adventure on Friday night. He has worked himself into a terrible passion about it, and when he is roused, he is really terrible."

I tried to look as if, when I was roused, I could be really terrible too, but only, I fear, with indifferent success.

"The worst of it is," she went on, "once he gets an idea into his head, it is absolutely impossible to get it out again. We might talk for hours, but we'd never persuade him that the version he has heard is a false and malicious libel."

"But surely, madam," I asked, beginning to feel uncomfortable, "surely your brother will listen to reason?"

"You forget," she answered sadly. "My brother is an Irishman."

"Still," I persisted, though forced to admit that there was something in the objection, "I am a lawyer, as you know, and if I put the case plainly, tersely, and logically before Mr.—Mr.—"

"McCracken," she said; "Bangor McCracken."

"Bangor McCracken!" I repeated, with a shiver. A name more suggestive of pistols for two I had never heard.

"Of Ballykilbash," she added.

Worse and worse. The dreadful combination quite took my breath away. I paused and wiped my brow.

"No, no! you must not meet," said Mrs. Daly decidedly; "the consequences might be dreadful. If a duel resulted I'd never forgive myself. Twice already, I know, he has fought in France, and once he killed his man."

"That may be," I replied hastily, "but in this happy England of ours a duel is an impossibility."

"That means you would not meet him?" she enquired gladly. "Promise me—oh, promise me—that you will not allow him to draw you into a personal encounter."

I gave her my promise with the greatest alacrity. She looked relieved.

"Thank you," she said; "you embolden me to make another request. Pray go from here at once—this very day. You are both high-spirited men, and I shudder to think of what may happen if you come to words."

So did I!

"As for your brother, he is safe from me," I replied magnanimously. "For your sake I give up my fervent wish to meet this man and have an explanation with him; for your sake I promise to leave this hotel without a moment's avoidable delay. Set your mind quite at rest on his account. I'll not lay a finger on him."

For a moment her face brightened; but it quickly clouded over again.

"It's of no use," she sighed. "I was forgetting. He copied your address from the hotel visitors' book, and he'll follow you. Oh, you do not know how determined he is! On one occasion he followed a man who he fancied had insulted him, half over the country, and when he caught him, horsewhipped him within an inch of his life. He left the man for dead."

The idea of flying all over England

pursued by a wild Irishman with a horse-whip was certainly far from agreeable, but still I strove to retain my self-possession.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "if—for your sake, of course, entirely for your sake—I went abroad for a few weeks——"

"It would be useless. He'd wait till you came back. He never forgets and never forgives."

"Let him follow me to Hilminster if he likes, then," I burst out angrily. "If he touches me he'll find he's caught a Tartar."

"What would you do?" cried Mrs. Daly.

"Do! Have him bound over to keep the peace," I returned recklessly.

"You might do that, of course. But then—think of the scandal that might ensue."

The scandal! To be sure; that had to be considered. No doubt the scoundrel McCracken would have the impudence to set up a defence of justification, and I could see that our unfortunate accident, innocent as it was, might give a grand opportunity to unscrupulous counsel. I had spent most of my life in seeking the bubble reputation even from the canons' mouths, and rather than forfeit what I had gained I would almost have been ready to endure my horsewhipping in silence. Yet if I allowed myself to be publicly horsewhipped with impunity, my position would not be much better. My kind friends would go about shaking their heads mysteriously, and whispering that they always had said it would happen to me some day, that without doubt I had good reasons for my leniency, and that they had it on the best authority that, if the case had been brought into court, a terrible scandal must have come to light. In short, by the end of a week or two my character would be in shreds, and my character was the larger portion of my stock-in-trade. My resolution was instantly taken.

"You are right, Mrs. Daly," I said, after a pause. "For your sake again, there must be no scandal."

"Yet I don't see how it's to be avoided," she answered dolefully. "When a man like my brother Bangor mixes himself up in anything, there's almost bound to be a scandal. No, I can see no way out of it."

I myself could only see the one: to propose to Mrs. Daly. After all, I liked her very much, she seemed to be well-to-do—and there was just a chance she might refuse me. In any case, my respectability was even dearer to me than my liberty.

"Then for the future," I cried, taking the plunge at once, "let him have no

ground for interfering with your affairs. Give that dear charge to me! Recent occurrences have only precipitated a declaration you must long have seen trembling on my lips. Nora! is it possible—may I dare to hope—that you will consent to share my lot, and thereby make me the happiest of men?"

"Oh, Jasper!" she whispered. "This is so unexpected! But if you really wish it—why—yes!"

She was mine!

After that, as I had anticipated, we had no more trouble with Bangor McCracken; indeed, he was so entirely satisfied that he took himself off from Codrington that very night without so much as seeing me; and even at our wedding, which took place a couple of months later, he failed to put in an appearance.

#### WANTED, A SKIPPER.

"ANY more skippers?" asked a deep voice from the private room of a shipping office in Fenchurch Avenue.

"I think that one was the last, sir," replied a clerk, looking over the ground-glass screen.

Half-a-dozen seafaring men, bronzed and bluff, had already passed in, and had come out looking more or less scornful and dissatisfied. But there was a young man, fair-haired and fresh-looking, still sitting in a corner, who sprang forward and handed in a card—it bore the name of George Ernest Seymour—saying:

"Take my name in to the governor. I'm a skipper too."

The "governor" looked somewhat superciliously at the young man as he entered.

"Not much experience, I should think!" taking the young man's papers and certificates, and glancing carelessly over them.

"No," replied Seymour firmly; "yours will be my first command and perhaps my last, if, as I gather, it proves 'a risky job.'"

The shipping man looked at the other keenly.

There was plenty of dash and courage about the youth, evidently; and he went through his papers more attentively, and finally nodded his head, and turned to explain for what purpose the skipper was wanted.

The "Parahyba," a fine ocean steamer, Clyde-built, and over four thousand tons register, handsomely fitted for passenger

traffic, was now lying in the harbour of Rio. She was originally intended for a "national" line of steamers between Rio and Havre, an enterprise that had been stopped by the breaking out of the revolution, and there was danger that the ship, which was then under the Brazilian flag, would be seized by one or other of the contending parties. Her owners, Segrado and Company, of Rio, had accordingly sold her at a nominal price to an English firm, and an English skipper was required to go out to her, hoist the British flag and bring her home, whatever the Dons might have to say about it, armed forts on one side, ironclad war-ships on the other.

So much for the risk; and now for the reward, which was on the "no cure no pay" principle: a thousand pounds if the skipper brought the ship safely into an English port, and the command of her subsequently. A free passage out would be provided, and a credit with Segrado and Company for the expenses of shipping a crew out there.

Seymour pondered for a few minutes. No one was dependent on him; he was in no immediate want of money; he was sick of acting as first officer, with all the work and scanty pay; his seniors were wiry, seasoned men likely to last well into the next century. He signified his assent to the terms; articles were prepared and signed, and within four-and-twenty hours he was on board a steamer bound for the South American ports, with a Channel gale whistling in his ears as he hummed the old sailors' shanty:

To Rio Grande we're bound, away to Rio;  
Then fare you well, my pretty young girls,  
We're bound to the Rio Grande.

The voyage was uneventful, and in due time was made out the bluff peak of the Sugarloaf mountain, that guards the entrance to the harbour. But here it was evident there was something serious going on. The roar of guns, the screeching of huge shells, could be heard for a long distance in the soft balmy air, and as they approached the harbour mouth, rolling clouds of white sulphurous smoke veiled the scene within. The captain of the steamer decided that he could not risk entering the port, and to sheer away for Monte Video. But he hailed a fishing-boat, manned by one swarthy Brazilian, who was quietly laying out his lines regardless of all the din; and Pedro the fisherman agreed to put the English señor ashore for a smart consideration. And in addition Pedro

bargained for a dollar for every shot that missed the boat, adding, with a grin, that he would himself pay the señor five times over for any shot that struck.

Still Pedro took no unfair advantage of his bargain, hanging off and on till night came on, and the firing almost ceased. Then they crept in with the tide unnoticed from the shore. All the lights and the buoys that formerly marked the channels had been removed, and lines of torpedoes substituted; but Pedro could have found his way in or out blindfolded, and his boat glided on in safety. Once, indeed, a gun flashed out at them from a fort, and a shell went screaming past, ricocheting and driving up great columns of glittering spray, and then Pedro slapped his pocket ecstatically, for they were soon out of range. Then a white search-light suddenly gleamed upon them, and they were challenged peremptorily from a great war-ship, surrounded by torpedo nettings, where they could hear the click of a machine gun being brought to bear upon them. But Pedro's response of "Poor fishermen" was sufficient. He and his boat were well known, and allowed to pass.

"And where does the señor wish to land?" asked Pedro, leaning on his oars, all the dangers of the passage being over.

"On board the 'Parahyba,'" cried Seymour. He longed to find himself in the captain's cabin of his own ship.

"But, señor, no," cried Pedro, crossing himself devoutly. "Not for a boatload of rials would I venture near that ship at night. And, señor capitano, she lies five miles away at the other side of the harbour. No, it is impossible," and he sank forward as if utterly exhausted.

As nothing would induce Pedro to make the passage, Seymour bade him row to the nearest quay.

"In the morning," said Pedro apologetically, as he moored his boat. "But to-night, oh no! Do you know, señor, that the 'Parahyba' is haunted?"

"Nonsense, Pedro!" said Seymour, jealous of the character of his new ship. "And you a brave man! I am ashamed of you!"

"But, señor," cried Pedro, laying a bronzed finger on the other's jacket, "I have seen with mine own eyes. Not long ago in the moonlight I was fishing over there, and crossed the stern of the 'Parahyba,' and knowing the stavedore in charge of her, and who sometimes had bought fish from me; what do I see?"

Thrust through the porthole in her side was a hideous face glowing with fire like a demon's. "I am in torments, tell my wife!" and he disappeared."

"And what about the stevedore?" asked Seymour, with a good deal of interest.

"He has been seen no more. No one will go on board, but cries and groans have been heard. And consulting the good fathers we hear of a Spanish sea captain drowned over there, fifty years ago, impenitent and unconfessed. Doubtless he is in purgatory. Perhaps the señor capitano will pay for masses for the soul of a brother seaman?"

"Not I," said Seymour hastily, and perhaps unfeelingly. "He may get out as he got in!"

Yet he was vexed at the story, which might hinder his getting a crew together.

Although the quays seemed desolate and deserted, there was life enough in the city, and things went on much as usual in spite of the civil war. Seymour was comfortably lodged at an hotel, and sallying out next morning he was delighted with the city, which was on a small scale a tropical Paris, with gay shops and lively streets, where people lounged under awnings, and sat outside the cafés, taking little heed of the distant reverberations of the great guns. Tram-cars drawn by lively mules went jingling along. Negro porters laughing and singing threaded their way through the crowd. Stalls of luscious fruit were at the disposal of the passers-by.

"Don't be too eager, my young friend," said a voice at Seymour's elbow. "Remember Yellow Jack!"

The young skipper turned with a basket of fruit in his hand. Well he knew that name of evil import. Comrades had told him of the dreaded Yellow Jack, that mows down men and women as the reaper mows down corn-stalks. But he had thought it a thing of the past.

Still, it was hanging about the place, said the good-natured Englishman who had accosted him, and some said it had been very bad among the troops and on the ships in the harbour. Oh, yes, he could direct the captain to the house of Segrado and Company. For it was Seymour's first business to verify his credit with that respectable firm.

A beautiful place appeared the house of Segrado when one passed out of the hot street into its cool courtyard, where grew a mass of palms and tropical plants, orchids hanging in glorious clusters, and columns

and verandahs wreathed with luxuriant creepers. The counting-house was under the great porte cochère. Its only occupant at this moment was a dark, sinister-looking man in a straw hat and light suit, who sat in a basket-chair, smoking a huge cigar. He pointed with the lighted end of his weed to an inner door. Seymour went in. There at a table writing sat a young and very lovely woman, an expression of intense perplexity on her beautiful face. So engrossed she was in her occupation that Seymour continued to gaze upon her unobserved, unwilling to cut short the pleasing vision, till, throwing down her pen, she buried her face in her hands with an exclamation of despair.

"Madam," cried Seymour, advancing a step.

She looked up, startled, an indignant flash in her eyes lighting up their gloom.

"Your business, sir?" she cried peremptorily.

Seymour placed in her hands the papers with which he was charged. The señora looked over them in some embarrassment.

"So," she said at last, fixing her dark eyes softly upon him, "you are the Capitano George Seymour, whom I expected." But she added in a disappointed tone: "You are very young!"

George was a little nettled at this, and replied brusquely:

"Well, madam, and you are not very old."

A witching gleam of mirth passed over Donna Segrado's face, replaced next moment by a wistful expression.

"Alas, yes; I am young and inexperienced. My husband is no longer young, and boasts of much experience; but he is away. I know not what to do. Would you be so kind, señor capitano, as to sit down here and tell me what all these papers mean?"

Seymour sat down beside her half tremblingly. Their hands met as they turned over the leaves of the papers. He felt her breath on his cheek as she leaned forward to listen eagerly to his explanations.

"Now," she said, when he had finished, "tell me what to sign, and I will do it. But I can sign perfectly, and often do for my husband. See!"

And in and with a beautiful hand she wrote "Segrado et Compagnie" at the foot of a bill of exchange.

"But, madam," expostulated the skipper, "you should not sign things on the advice of a stranger. Let me call in your head clerk, and he will tell you what to sign."



"Oh, no! no!" cried the señora, putting her hand on his arm. "I do not trust him. He is perfidious. They are all perfidious! Hush!"

They both were silent, and Seymour heard a low, regular murmur from an inner closet.

"She still sleeps," cried the señora. "It is my duenna. She watches me continually. Let us speak low. I wonder if I can trust you?"

"With life or anything else," cried Seymour devotedly.

"It is life, perhaps," said the señora softly. "Listen! My husband is away, I know not where. A month ago he left me—for a few days. I have seen nothing, heard nothing of him. Oh, capitano! you have not met him, you have not seen him in England?"

The capitano shook his head. Sincerely as the question was asked, he could hardly repress a smile.

"But they do not know," continued the señora rapidly. "They think he has returned. If they were not afraid of him they would seize everything for the Government. At times they see a man moving about in my apartments. They think it is my husband. Shall I tell you who it is?" she asked, with a quick, vivid blush.

"If you please, madam," said Seymour rather stiffly.

"It is my darling brother Francisco. He is a naval officer; he is in the insurgent fleet. If they found him he would be shot. Conceive it! Just eighteen and as beautiful as an angel, and they would shoot him! And he comes at night, comes to comfort his poor sister! Listen!" cried the señora, in the very lowest of voices. "He is here now!"

"The deuce he is!" said Seymour. For he well knew the fate that awaited any captured insurgents.

"Yes," cried the señora, in low, vibrant tones. "The cause is lost! The word has gone forth, 'Sauve qui peut.' The poor boy has found refuge with me, but for how long? My God, my God, they will take him, they will kill him!"

"By Heaven," cried Seymour, cut to the heart at her distress, "he shall not die. I will save him."

"Did you call, señora?" said a strident voice, and the sinister figure of the head clerk appeared in the doorway.

"Yes," cried Seymour, taking the word from the lady, who was speechless. "Take this bill"—it was the bill the señora had signed—"go to the bank, get me cash for

it—gold—and bring it here at once. Do you hear? Quick!"

The man sniffed at the bill suspiciously, and seemed half inclined to dispute the order.

"Yes, go!" cried Donna Segrado. "Your master will be angry if it is not done at once."

And when the clerk had retired she seized the capitano's hand and kissed it.

"You will be our saviour!" she cried. "Yes, our saviour indeed!"

Never was a crew more quickly got together than the crew of the "Parahyba" that day. Seymour's energy carried all obstacles before it. The British Consul helped nobly, and some English skippers who were waiting for orders lent a hand. And before the day was over two boatloads of seamen had been shipped on board, the British flag was run up, and the blue Peter, fires were lighted; the inanimate ship began to breathe out smoke and steam, rigging and ropes were stretched and tautened, compasses were adjusted, and when the captain came aboard, the crew, as they mustered, gave him three ringing cheers.

But the naval authorities shook their heads. There were learned doubts as to whether the boat had legally acquired her rights as a British ship.

"You go out at your own risk, Captain Seymour," they said; which was pretty evident, for if he were sent to the bottom, no power could drag him up again.

And the skipper awaited the approach of night in much secret excitement. At dusk he went ashore in his own gig, picking out as smart a crew as he could, and he walked calmly up to Segrado's; for he had given out that Don Segrado and his wife were coming on board to say good-bye.

The "Don" and Donna were all ready, the former muffled up in a great cloak, poor man, and a big sombrero hat, and his wife in shawl and mantilla. Each took an arm of the captain, and they marched down towards the shore. The head clerk watched them narrowly, standing in the shadow of the great porte cochère. Suddenly he clapped his hands together. "I have got it!" he cried, and started off in the direction of the nearest guard-house.

"Take it easy, Don," cried the skipper, the ship's boat now in sight; "remember the rheumatics."

The Don—for it was Don Francisco, of course, under the disguise of the old gentleman's coat and hat—laughed gaily as he handed his sister into the boat, and as the sailors tossed their oars in respect for the late owner.

But hardly had they left the quay when a shout was heard, and a mounted officer was seen dashing along and crying out, "Stop them."

"Give way, boys," cried the captain, and the men did give way with a will. The officer fired his carbine, but the bullet went wide, and in a few moments the boat was out of range.

There was now no time to be lost, for of a surety the forts would be ordered to fire on the "Parahyba" if they did not look sharp. The señora stood trembling on the gangway, for a shore boat had been hailed to take her back. She wept on her brother's neck; she gave a hand to the skipper, who stood by irresolute.

"Addio, capitano," she cried. "My blessings attend you."

She could say no more for tears.

"Oh, hang it!" cried the captain huskily. "You shan't go back to those scoundrels. Here, you lubbers, sheer off," and he threw a handful of silver among the shore boatmen, who laughed and wished him a good voyage.

"What, will you take me, too?" cried the señora, full of joy.

"Ay, ay," cried the skipper, and next moment his voice was all over the ship, as the anchor came up, the cables were stowed, and the engines went full speed ahead, and the boat stood out for the harbour mouth.

It was a risky business, running out on a dark night, all guiding lights extinguished, and the waters bristling with hidden dangers; but the skipper knew his bearings, and was unexpectedly aided by events, for soon headlands and shores were lighted up by burning buildings and ships. The insurrection had indeed collapsed, its officers were fugitives, and their ships were derelict or set on fire. But this was hardly known to the other side, and the forts thundered away in harmless salvos while our skipper ran the gauntlet almost unnoticed and quite unharmed.

By morning they were out of sight of land, and the skipper was thoughtfully pacing the quarter-deck, while young Francisco, who took a sailor's interest in what was going on, was looking out from the bridge.

"Well, sir," said the quartermaster, touching his hat—he had just come up from below—"we've got a passenger on board we

did not reckon for. No, sir, I don't mean the young lieutenant. I mean 'Yellow Jack!'"

The skipper turned pale.

"How's that?" he cried sharply.

The seaman said that searching the hold, thinking there was something wrong, he discovered among the ballast the corpse of a man, and evidently of one who died of yellow fever.

"'Twas the caretaker, I expect," said the quartermaster. "I heard some of 'em got took."

But it was not the caretaker. Perhaps he got ashore to die. When the body was brought to light, Francisco, who was looking on, recognised it at once. Shriveled and lean, the face was little altered by death. It was a mummy rather than a corpse, but it had once been Don Segrado.

The skipper read a prayer, and it was launched into the deep. And then the question was, whom will Jack take first? But he spared them all. A stiff south-westerly gale blew all infection out of the ship, and sent her staggering along on the homeward track. Homeward for the skipper, but what for the other two poor refugees?

However, the skipper soon solved the question in his straightforward manner. First, he gently broke to the señora the news of her husband's death. Then he asked tremblingly, "Don't you think Providence intended you to be my wife?"

She put her hand into his, and whispered: "Providence is very kind, my capitano!"

After all, that Don, if old and lean, was not such a bad fellow. The quartermaster, fumigating and clearing up, came upon a folded sheet of paper which proved to be in Don Segrado's handwriting:

"Foreseeing future troubles, I placed all my wealth on board this ship in silver ingots, painted like iron. Take it all, my dear wife.—SEGRADO."

Now although silver is cheap just now, a few tons of it run into money. But the señora means to stay with Seymour's people quietly in the country till her year of widowhood is expired, and then perhaps the captain and his wife will be heard of again. But what is her Christian name, after all? The skipper surely does not go on calling her señora? Well, that is not easy to guess. Her brother has some pet name for her, and with the skipper she is "my darling."

#### ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

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## TABLE OF EVENTS, 1893-1894.

### SEPTEMBER, 1893.

- 1.—In House of Commons, the Irish Home Rule Bill carried by majority of 34, and read for the first time in House of Lords.  
At Herne Hill, G. E. Osmond and J. W. Stocks, on a tandem safety, covered 26 miles 156 yards in an hour.
- 2.—Bath Road Club's Hundred Miles Challenge Cup, won by S. F. Edge, in 5 hours 24 min. 57 sec.; best on record.
- 4.—Official announcement that General Sir Henry Norman, Governor of Queensland, had been appointed Viceroy of India, in succession to Lord Lansdowne.
- 6.—Mr. McCalmont's Isinglass, winner of Two Thousand Guineas and Derby, easily won the St. Leger, Ravensbury and Le Nicham coming in second and third. Seven ran.
- 7.—Very serious colliery riots in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. At Featherstone and another place, Riot Act read and military ordered to fire, with the result that two men were shot dead and several others wounded.
- 8.—Irish Home Rule Bill rejected by House of Lords by 419 votes to 41, largest division ever taken in Upper Chamber.
- 9.—At the Oval, A. W. Harris bicycled ten miles in 27 min. 23½ sec.
- 11.—Royal Victoria Yacht Club Cup, won by Prince of Wales's "Britannia," who beat the American yacht "Navahoe" for third time in succession.
- 13.—The race for the Breton Reef Cup, from Needles to Cherbourg and back, about 120 miles, between "Britannia" and "Navahoe," probably the closest long-distance yacht race ever sailed, ended in the prize being awarded to the American, although the Prince's cutter had been first declared the winner by 2½ sec. The distance was accomplished in about 12 hours.
- 14, 15.—Rio de Janeiro bombarded by an insurgent fleet, great damage being done to the city and several persons killed.
- 16.—In their final contest—for the Cape May Cup—to Cherbourg and back, the "Britannia" defeated "Navahoe" by 36 min.
- 18.—The twenty-four hours' cycling race in Paris, won by Swiss champion Lesna, who covered 433 miles in the time.
- 21.—Official notification published that Sir H. Norman had withdrawn his acceptance of Viceroyalty of India.  
Eleven men shot dead at Roanoke, Virginia, in an attempt to break into the gaol to lynch a negro prisoner.  
Opening of Conference of Institute of Journalists in Lincoln's Inn Hall.
- 22.—Parliament adjourned for an Autumn Session.  
Brilliant reception and ball to members of Institute of Journalists at Guildhall, over

three thousand guests, including many foreign visitors, being present.

- 28.—Lancashire Plate won by Raeburn, the hitherto unbeaten Isinglass being second, and La Flèche third.  
At Chicago, the International billiard match between John Roberts, Champion of England, and Frank Ives, Champion of America, won by Ives by 788 points.  
Sculling match on the Thames between George Bubeare and T. Sullivan, of New Zealand, for Championship of England, won by the Colonial oarsman in 22½ min.
- 26.—Sir John Gilbert, R.A., presented with freedom of City of London at Guildhall.
- 29.—Mr. Alderman Tyler elected Lord Mayor of London for ensuing civic year.

### OCTOBER, 1893.

- 3.—Duke of York presented with freedom of City of Edinburgh.  
Mile bicycle record established at Herne Hill by A. W. Harris, who covered the distance in 2 min. 4½ sec.
- 5.—The Duke and Duchess of York visited York, where they were most enthusiastically received, and the Duke presented with freedom of the City.  
Sir Mortimer Durand and the other members of the British Mission arrived at Cabul, and cordially welcomed by the Ameer.  
At New York, the commencing race for the America Cup between Lord Dauraven's yacht "Valkyrie" and the American champion yacht "Vigilant" had to be abandoned owing to want of wind.
- 7.—In twelve hours' cycling contest at Herne Hill, for which twenty-seven started, C. G. Wridgeway covered 240 miles 690 yards, the greatest distance yet made.  
The first completed race for the America Cup, won by "Vigilant" by 6 min.  
The second International billiard match, 10,000 up, between John Roberts and Frank Ives, played at New York, won by the English champion by 1,150 points.  
At Kempton Park, the Duke of York Stakes won by Avington.
- 9.—In second completed race for America Cup, "Vigilant" again won by 10½ min.
- 11.—Lord Elgin appointed Viceroy of India.  
Another race for the America Cup not concluded owing to calm weather.  
At Newmarket, the race for the Cesarewitch ended in a dead heat between Red Eyes and Cypria. Seventeen ran.
- 13.—Arrival of a Russian fleet at Toulon, which met with a most enthusiastic welcome from the French, both afloat and ashore.  
The third of the finished races between the English and American yachts resulted in

Vigilant being again successful, but by twelve seconds only, and after a splendid contest. By this victory the Cup is retained by the American holders.

- 17.—Death of Marshal MacMahon, aged 85.
- 18.—Death at St. Cloud of Charles Gounod, the renowned French composer, 75 years old.
- 20.—News arrived that fighting had begun between the British South African Company's forces and the Matabele, who were totally defeated, and that an advance upon their capital had been ordered.
- 25.—Cambridgeshire won by Polly Morgan, who beat Raeburn, Prisoner, and nineteen others.
- 26.—Garrick Theatre Company arrived at Balmoral, and gave a successful performance of "Diplomacy" before the Queen and a large circle.
- 27.—Another battle between the Chartered Company's forces, and the Matabele, who were put to flight with great loss, and their capital destroyed.

### NOVEMBER, 1893.

- 2.—Reassembly of House of Commons for an Autumn Session.
- 3.—Frightful disaster at the Spanish port of Santander, the greater part of the town being destroyed, and hundreds of lives lost, by the explosion of an immense quantity of dynamite on board a large steamer discharging cargo at the quay. The steamer itself was blown to pieces, all on board perishing except two.
- Further severe fighting in Matabeleland, the natives being again decisively defeated.
- 8.—Terrible Anarchist atrocity at Barcelona, two bombs having been hurled from the upper gallery of the Liceo Theatre into the stalls, with the appalling result that twenty persons were killed, and many others seriously injured.
- 9.—Fifty-second birthday of Prince of Wales. Lord Mayor's Day. At the Guildhall banquet Lord Kimberley made the political speech usual on the occasion.
- 10.—Liverpool Cup won by La Flèche, beating eleven others.
- 11.—Mr. F. H. Cowen's opera, "Signa," produced at Milan, and met with an extremely good reception.
- 13.—At Balmoral, the Carl Rosa Company performed "Fra Diavolo" before the Queen and Court.
- 15.—By a fire in the Old Bailey, immense destruction of property was occasioned, Newgate Prison being for some time in considerable danger.
- Sir John Gorst elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University, Mr. Asquith, Home Secretary, being the defeated candidate.
- 16.—Death at Montreux of Sir Robert Morier, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg.
- 17.—End of the great coal strike, which had lasted over four months, a settlement having been arranged at a meeting between owners and colliers held in London under presidency of Lord Rosebery.
- Death at Gratz of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, ex-Prince of Bulgaria, at the early age of 37 years.

- 18.—Death of Lord Ebury, aged 93. The deceased Peer sat in House of Commons as long as seventy-one years ago.
- 25.—Manchester November Handicap won by Golden Drop, nineteen others starting.

### DECEMBER, 1893.

- 2.—The new railway connecting Port Said with Ismailia, opened by Khedive of Egypt.
- 6.—Prince of Wales nominated Grand Master of English Freemasons for twentieth successive year.
- 9.—Terrible Anarchist outrage perpetrated in French Chamber of Deputies, a bomb having been thrown down from one of the galleries and more or less severely injuring about fifty persons—members or visitors—in the House. A man named Vaillant was arrested, and admitted the deed.
- 13.—At West Kensington, the University Rugby football match won by Oxford after a keen contest by a try to nothing.
- 27.—Boxing Day. Fine mild weather prevailed throughout the last Bank Holiday of the year, all places of popular resort being well attended, as were theatres and music-halls in the evening.
- 29.—Mr. Gladstone's eighty-fourth birthday.

### JANUARY, 1894.

- 1.—Manchester Ship Canal informally opened for general traffic with much rejoicing.
- 13.—International hundred miles cycling match at Paris between Linton, English hundred miles champion, and Dubois, the French cyclist, won by former in 4 hours 47 min. House of Commons adjourned to 12th February.
- 22.—News arrived that the absconding Jabez Balfour, ex-manager of the notorious Liberator Building Society, and ex-M.P. for Burnley, had been arrested in Argentina, at the instance of the British Vice-Consul, for extradition to this country.
- 25.—The long-talked-of fight between Mitchell and Corbett, for £4,000 and Championship of the World, took place at Jacksonville, U.S.A., and resulted in defeat of the English pugilist, after a short but fiercely fought battle of three rounds.
- Death of Sir Gerald Portal, the young and distinguished diplomatist, who had recently returned from Uganda in Central Africa, aged 35 years.
- 26.—After an estrangement of over three years, Prince Bismarck visited German Emperor at Berlin, and received such a cordial and splendid reception, as fully proved the complete reconciliation between the great statesman and his sovereign.
- 27.—In the return hundred miles cycling match at Paris, Dubois avenged his recent defeat by winning a rather easy victory over Linton in 4 hours 40 min.

### FEBRUARY, 1894.

- 1.—Official denial published that Mr. Gladstone contemplated early retirement from public life.



- 3.—Of two International Rugby football matches, that at Blackheath between England and Ireland won by the Irish by a goal and a try to a goal; while at Newport the Welsh beat Scotland by a try to nothing.
- Mr. E. Burne-Jones, the distinguished painter, created a Baronet.
- 5.—Vaillant, the man who perpetrated the bomb outrage in Chamber of Deputies, guillotined in Paris.
- 12.—Re-assembly of House of Commons.
- Another dastardly Anarchist outrage in Paris, a bomb having been thrown on the floor of the Café Terminus, crowded with customers, with the result that one man was killed and some twenty persons badly injured. The perpetrator, Emile Henry, was arrested, but not before he had fired at and seriously wounded the gendarme by whom he was seized, who, nevertheless, clung to him until assistance arrived. For this plucky act the officer was granted the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and otherwise rewarded.
- 15.—News from South Africa that Lobengula, the Matabele King, was dead, and that the country was tranquil, and fighting entirely at an end.
- By an explosion in the engine-room of the large German ironclad "Brandenburg," off Kiel, forty-two men were instantly killed and several others injured.
- In Greenwich Park, a young Frenchman and well-known Anarchist, named Martial Bourdin, sustained such terrible injuries near the Observatory, just before dark, from the explosion of a bomb which he had about him, that death ensued within half an hour after his admission into the adjacent Seaman's Hospital.
- 19.—Return visit of German Emperor to Prince Bismarck at Friedrichsruhe, the Kaiser meeting with an enthusiastic reception on his arrival at the station.
- 21.—At Queen's Park, the annual University football match, under Association rules, won by Cambridge by 3 goals to 1.
- 23.—Serious British disaster in the Gambia district, West Africa, an expedition of 220 seamen, under command of Captain Gamble, of the flag-ship "Raleigh," sent to punish the slave-raiding chief, Fodi Selah, having fallen into an ambuscade on their return to their boats, and sustained a loss of three officers and ten men killed, and five officers and forty-seven men wounded, before they were able to re-embark.
- 24.—The new Polytechnic Institution, Battersea, which had cost £60,000, opened by Prince and Princess of Wales.
- Waterloo Cup won by Count Stroganoff's bitch Texture, Mr. Fletcher's Falconer being the runner-up.
- The International Rugby football match at Dublin, between Ireland and Scotland, gained by the Irish by five points to nothing.
- 5.—Parliament prorogued for a week after a session of thirteen months.
- 10.—Fighting in West Africa brought to a successful conclusion, Fodi Selah's strongholds being destroyed, and he himself put to flight and captured in French territory. By winning their match with Wales at Belfast, the Irish, for first time in their history, became champions of Rugby International Football for the year.
- 12.—New Session of Parliament opened.
- 13.—Departure of the Queen for Florence.
- Collapse of Brazilian insurrection, the rebel ships at Rio making unconditional surrender, and their officers going on board Portuguese war-ships in the harbour.
- 15.—Another dynamite outrage attempted in Paris, the scene this time being the Church of the Madeleine. No damage was done, and the only person killed or injured was the would-be bomb-thrower himself, whose dead body, frightfully mangled, was found near the entrance. Like Bourdin in Greenwich Park, he had been undoubtedly "hoist with his own petard."
- 17.—For fifth year in succession, Oxford defeated Cambridge in the University Boat Race, winning very easily by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lengths.
- At Edinburgh, the Scotch beat England in the International Rugby football match.
- The University Athletic Sports at West Kensington attracted a record attendance, and resulted in Oxford winning six and Cambridge three events.
- 20.—Death at Turin of Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, aged 92 years.
- 25.—The upsetting of a paraffin lamp in a room at Clerkenwell caused the death of a man and his wife and three young children, an infant of fourteen days old being the only one of the unfortunate family saved.
- 26.—Easter Monday. Brilliant weather favoured holiday folks, all places of resort being thronged, nearly 70,000 visiting Crystal Palace alone.
- 27.—Lincolnshire Handicap won by Le Nicham, with Juvenal and Macready second and third. Nineteen ran.
- 30.—Liverpool Grand National gained by Why Nor, beating Lady Ellen and twelve others.

#### APRIL, 1894.

- 7.—German Emperor arrived at Venice, and cordially received by King of Italy.
- 10.—Visit of King and Queen of Italy to Queen Victoria at Florence.
- 12.—Announcement in Parliament that a British Protectorate would be established in Uganda.
- 13.—German Emperor visited Emperor of Austria at Vienna.
- 16.—The Chancellor of Exchequer made his Budget statement, showing that the estimated revenue for 1894-5 would fall short of expenditure by four and a half millions, which he proposed to make up by largely increasing the death rates, by an additional penny on incomes over £500, by an extra sixpence a gallon on whisky, and sixpence a barrel on beer.

#### MARCH, 1894.

- 2-3.—Mr. Gladstone resigned office, and Lord Rosebery appointed Prime Minister in his stead.

- The Queen left Florence for Coburg to be present at the Royal wedding.
- 18.—The City and Suburban won by Grey Leg, Xury and Le Nicham being second and third. Eleven ran.
- 19.—In presence of the Queen, German Emperor, Empress Frederick, Prince of Wales, Czarewitsch, and many other Royal and distinguished guests, the marriage of Grand Duke of Hesse to his cousin, Princess Victoria, second daughter of Duke of Saxe-Coburg and grand-daughter of the Queen, solemnised at Coburg with much pomp.
- 20.—Announcement of betrothal of Czarewitsch to Princess Alix of Hesse.
- Memorial to Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," in Westminster Abbey unveiled by Princess Christian.
- Terrible earthquakes at Athens and throughout nearly all Greece, causing great destruction both of life and property.
- German Emperor appointed Honorary Colonel of 1st Royal Dragoons by the Queen, this being the first instance of a foreign Sovereign being placed upon the roll of officers of the British Army.
- 27, 28.—More earthquake shocks in Greece, with additional loss of life and property.
- 28.—At Huddersfield, the Ten Miles Amateur Championship race again won by Mr. Sid. Thomas, in 51 min. 37 sec.
- 29.—Return of the Queen to Windsor.

## MAY, 1894.

- 1.—Mansion House Fund opened in aid of sufferers by the earthquakes in Greece.
- 2.—New Royal Academy of Music, South Kensington, opened in state by Prince of Wales on behalf of the Queen.
- Chester Cup won by Quessitum.
- 4.—In a spot-barred billiard match at Manchester, John Roberts made the magnificent break of 1,392, a record not likely to be broken unless by the champion himself.
- 5.—Kempton Park Jubilee Stakes, for which twenty ran, won by Avington.
- Opening by King Leopold of the Antwerp Universal Exhibition.
- Industrial Exhibition at Earl's Court inaugurated by the Lord Mayor.
- 7.—By an explosion at the Government Cordite Works near Waltham Abbey, four men were killed and twenty injured.
- 9.—Lord Rosebery's Ladas won the Two Thousand Guinea Stakes at Newmarket, beating Matchbox, Athlone, and five others.
- 11.—The One Thousand Guineas won by Amiable, Lady Minting and Mecca being second and third. Thirteen ran.
- 14.—Mr. Mundella resigned office as President of Board of Trade.
- Whit Monday. Magnificent weather, and all places of amusement crowded to excess.
- Ninth annual Parade of London Cart Horse Society in Regent's Park.
- 16.—Owing to a dispute with owners, several thousand London cab-drivers went out on strike.

- 17.—In brilliant weather the Queen visited Aldershot, and reviewed about twelve thousand men of all arms, under command of Duke of Connaught.

Manchester Cup race resulted in dead heat between Shancrotha and Red Ensign, sixteen starting.

- 18.—By command of the Queen, Madame Eleonora Duse and her company performed "La Locandiera" at Windsor Castle.
- 19.—Royal Italian Opera Company visited Windsor and gave a performance of "Faust" before the Queen.

International bicycle race from Bordeaux to Paris, 366 miles, for which eighty-seven started, won by Swiss champion, Lesna, in 25 hours 11 min., three Englishmen taking next places.

- 21.—Emile Henry, who committed the dynamite outrage at the Café Terminus, guillotined in Paris.

In presence of enormous and enthusiastic crowds, the Manchester Ship Canal formally opened by the Queen—the Lord Mayor of Manchester and Mayor of Salford being knighted on the occasion.

Six Anarchists, condemned to death for complicity in the bomb explosion at Liceo Theatre, shot at Barcelona.

- 24.—Seventy-fifth birthday of the Queen.
- Newmarket Stakes easily won by Ladas.
- G. P. Mills bicycled from Edinburgh to London in record time of 29 hours 28 min.

## JUNE, 1894.

- 2.—Opening of International Congress of Young Men's Christian Association at Exeter Hall, numerous foreign and colonial delegates being present.
- 6.—As generally anticipated, Lord Rosebery's Ladas had little difficulty in adding the Derby to his already numerous victories, as he easily beat Matchbox, Reminder, and four others—the first instance of the "Blue Riband" of the Turf being won by a Prime Minister in office.
- 7.—Matchbox, second to Ladas in Two Thousand Guineas and Derby, purchased by Baron Hirsch for £15,000, and £5,000 additional should he win the Grand Prix.
- 8.—The Oaks won by Duke of Portland's Amiable, who beat Sweet Duchess, Sarana, and eight other fillies.
- 9.—Parliamentary Golf Handicap ended in the victory of Mr. A. J. Balfour, M.P., who defeated Mr. Nicholson, Clerk in House of Commons, in final heat.
- 11.—News from Tangiers of sudden death of Emperor of Morocco.
- London Cab Strike settled on terms suggested by Home Secretary, acting as mediator between masters and men.
- 14.—By capsizing of a smack at Westport, County Mayo, forty Irish harvesters, about to embark for England, were drowned, nearly seventy others being saved by shore boats and those of a steamer in the bay.
- Death in London of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, aged 73.

- 15.—Bill to legalise marriage with a deceased wife's sister again rejected by House of Lords, the votes being 129 to 120.  
From explosions in two collieries at Trappau, in Silesia, 230 men perished.
- 16.—Attempt to shoot Signor Crispi, the Italian Prime Minister, while driving with his secretary in the streets of Rome. Fortunately neither gentleman was hit, but the would-be assassin was with difficulty rescued from the infuriated people.
- 17.—Grand Prix de Paris, regarded as a certainty for Matchbox, won by Dolma-Baghtché, who beat the English horse by a neck.
- 19-22.—At Ascot, the Ascot Stakes won by Aborigine; Prince of Wales's Stakes by Contract; Royal Hunt Cup by Victor Wild; Gold Cup by La Flèche; and the rich Hardwicke Stakes by Ravensbury.
- 20.—Radical Conference at Leeds, convened by National Liberal Federation, for the purpose of calling upon Government to take measures for "ending" or "mending" the House of Lords!
- 23.—The Duchess of York gave birth to a son at White Lodge, Richmond, the infant Prince being the third heir in direct succession to the Throne.  
Appalling explosion at Albion Colliery, Cilfynydd, near Pontypridd, the terrible death-roll amounting to nearly three hundred.
- 24.—M. Carnot, President of French Republic, mortally stabbed whilst driving to the Theatre at Lyons, dying in a few hours after receiving the fatal blow. The assassin, a young Italian Anarchist, named Sauto, was seized red-handed, and with the utmost difficulty saved by the police from being torn to pieces by the infuriated crowd. The most intense indignation prevailed in France—and indeed throughout the civilised world—when this most deplorable event became known, and the greatest sympathy was universally evinced.
- 26.—Mansion House Fund opened for relief of the numerous widows and orphans left destitute in South Wales.
- 27.—M. Casimir-Périer elected President of the French Republic.
- 30.—Tower Bridge opened in state by Prince of Wales on behalf of the Queen, the Lord Mayor being made a Baronet, and the Sheriffs and Chairman of the Bridge House Committee, Knights, in commemoration of the event.

## JULY, 1894.

- 1.—State funeral of M. Carnot in Paris, amid every indication of the profound grief of the enormous crowds who witnessed the solemn procession.
- 2.—Lord Russell appointed Lord Chief Justice of England.
- 4.—University cricket match won by Oxford.
- 5.—In the Princess of Wales's Stakes at Newmarket, Ladas suffered his first defeat, only obtaining third place, Isinglass and Bullington being first and second.  
The Prince of Wales's "Britannia" defeated the American champion "Vigilant" on the Clyde, mid much excitement and after a splendid contest. A most unfortunate collision occurred in the race between "Satanita" and "Valkyrie," by which Lord Dunraven's famous yacht was immediately sunk, happily without loss of life.
- 6.—The Italian Opera Company gave a performance of "Philemon et Baucis" and "La Navarraise" at Windsor Castle by command of the Queen.
- 7.—At the Oval, Players defeated Gentlemen by an innings and 27 runs.  
Amid great enthusiasm and after a very close race, "Britannia" again beat "Vigilant," winning by two minutes on time allowance.  
Prince and Princess of Wales and their two daughters attended Speech Day at Harrow, the Princess distributing prizes.
- 9.—"Britannia" scored another victory over "Vigilant," winning by 9½ min.  
Rioting at Chicago, and in Illinois generally, became so threatening that martial law was proclaimed throughout the State.
- 10.—For fourth time, "Britannia" defeated "Vigilant" by about 6 minutes.  
In return match at Lord's, Gentlemen beat Players by an innings and 36 runs.
- 10, 11.—Severe earthquake shocks at Constantinople, occasioning great loss of life and immense destruction of property.
- 11.—The Queen visited Aldershot, and witnessed a grand torchlight tattoo, remaining at the Royal Pavilion for the night.  
In fifth race with "Britannia," the "Vigilant" suffered her worst defeat, losing by 21½ minutes.
- 12.—"Britannia" concluded her series of victories over "Vigilant" on the Clyde by winning the sixth race by 2 minutes.
- 13.—Owing to energetic action of President Cleveland, the great American railway strike, which had almost assumed the aspect of civil war, was concluded.
- 14.—Eton and Harrow cricket match drawn, owing to heavy rain on first day.  
Hurst Park Handicap won by Victor Wild.
- 16.—Christening of the infant son of Duke and Duchess of York at White Lodge, Richmond, in presence of the Queen, all the Royal Family, and many distinguished guests—the first two names given to the youthful Prince being Edward Albert.  
The International Athletic contests between Oxford and Yale Universities at Queen's Club, resulted in Oxford winning five events to the Americans' three—one being drawn.
- 16, 17.—At Belfast, "Britannia" and "Vigilant" met in two events, the English yacht winning the first and the American the second—who thus scored her first victory this side the Atlantic.
- 17.—Budget carried in House of Commons by 283 votes to 263.  
Mansion House Fund opened for relief of those left destitute by the earthquakes at Constantinople.

- 19.—In attempting to blow up a wreck in the Solent a quantity of gun-cotton exploded in the boat carrying out the operations, her crew of seven men being all killed.
- 20.—In Eclipse Stakes at Sandown, Isinglass again defeated Ladas, who was second.
- 20, 21.—At Kingston Regatta, "Britannia" and "Vigilant" competed in two more races, each winning one as at Belfast.
- 21.—At Bisle, the Queen's Prize of £250, with gold badge and medal, won by Private Rennie, 3rd Lanark.
- Hackney Marshes opened as a public park.
- 23.—Race for the Wingfield Sculls and Amateur Championship of the Thames won by Mr. V. Nickalls, Mr. E. Guinness being his only opponent.
- 23-25.—In a series of three races in Cork Harbour, "Britannia" won the first and "Vigilant" the second. In third race, "Vigilant" did not compete, leaving the English yacht to sail over the course.
- 24.—News received that hostilities had begun in Corea between China and Japan.
- 25.—Liverpool Cup won by Son of a Gun.
- 28.—For third year running, F. W. Shorland was victorious in the twenty-four hours cycling contest at Herne Hill, covering record distance of 460 miles 1,296 yards.
- The long distance amateur champion swimming race at Southampton won by J. H. Tyers, the holder.
- At Mount's Bay, "Britannia" again beat "Vigilant" by over 5 min.
- 31.—Stewards' Cup at Goodwood won by Gangway.
- 6.—Despite dull weather, Bank Holiday-makers were everywhere in evidence, all places of public resort being well filled.
- Arrival of German Emperor at Cowes.
- 7.—Queen's Cup at Cowes won by Carina. Brighton Cup won by Avington.
- Annual meeting of British Association for the Advancement of Science, opened at Oxford under presidency of Lord Salisbury.
- 9, 10.—At Cowes, "Britannia" won the Town Cup, beating "Vigilant" by over 4 min. She also won the Meteor Challenge Shield for second time, the German Emperor's prize thus becoming the absolute property of her Royal owner.
- 12.—Linton, the English cyclist, beat world's record by covering fifty miles, in Paris, under two hours.
- 13, 14.—Visit of Emperor William to Aldershot, where he was the guest of the Duke of Connaught, and witnessed a grand review and a sham fight; afterwards leaving on his return to Germany.
- 14.—Irish Evicted Tenants' Bill rejected by House of Lords by 249 votes to 30.
- Bomb outrage at Post Office, New Cross, a parcel placed in letter-box exploding and causing considerable damage to premises as well as injuring a passer-by.
- 15.—Ministerial Whitebait Dinner at "Ship," Greenwich, at which forty-four members of the Government were present.
- 16.—Caserio Santo, the assassin of President Carnot, executed at Lyons.
- 18.—Thousand Yards Amateur Salt-water Swimming Championship won by J. H. Tyers, at Southport, in record time of 15 min. 2 sec.
- 20, 21.—Announcements that the Argentine Federal Court had granted extradition of Jabez Balfour, and that he had appealed against decision.
- At Royal Albert Yacht Club Regatta, "Satanita" beat "Britannia" for the Cup; the subsequent match between the same yachts, however, being easily won by the Prince's cutter.
- 25.—Parliament prorogued by Royal Commission.
- 26.—Great Radical demonstration in Hyde Park against House of Lords, calling on the Government to take measures to abolish "a mischievous and useless hereditary Chamber."
- 27.—After a close contest throughout the season for County Cricket Championship, Surrey secured the coveted position with eleven points, Yorkshire, last year's winner, being second with ten.

## AUGUST, 1894.

- 1-3.—At Goodwood Races, the Stakes secured by Spindle Leg; Sussex Stakes by Match-box; Cup by Kilsallaghan; Rous Memorial by Saintly; Nassau Stakes by Throstle; and Chichester Stakes by Glengarry.
- 1.—War declared by Japan against China, sanguinary fighting, both by sea and land, having, however, taken place before the declaration. In the naval engagement a Chinese troop-ship was sunk with enormous loss of life, and in a battle on land the Japanese were decisively defeated.
- Sir W. Harcourt entertained at a banquet by the Liberal Members of House of Commons to celebrate his Budget becoming law.
- 4.—In a private match on the Solent, "Vigilant" beat "Britannia" by 4½ min.
- 5.—Annual meeting of the National Artillery Association at Shoeburyness.



## OBITUARY FOR 1893-1894.

As the century runs to its close, each recurring year shows a melancholy death-roll of those who have been more or less distinguished in the progress of the age, and who will figure in its annals even when forgotten by the men of the coming era.

The diplomatic world regrets the loss of SIR ROBERT MORIER, the Ambassador at St. Petersburg, not loved by the Bismarcks, but greatly esteemed by the Czar, who died on the 16th November; and SIR GERALD PORTAL, the vigorous envoy to Uganda, died of African fever on the 25th January, 1894. And the law has lost two distinguished judges: LORD HANNEN on the 30th March, and the venerable LORD CHIEF JUSTICE COLERIDGE on the 14th June, of the family made illustrious by the poet; and with these that learned ex-judge, SIR JAMES STEPHEN, on the 10th March, 1893. In EDWARD STANHOPE, M.P., ex-Secretary for War, the country has lost an able administrator; he died at the age—early for a politician—of fifty-four, on the 26th December. SIR PHILIP CUNLIFFE OWEN, K.C.B., great at exhibitions and artistic celebrations, expired on the 23rd March.

Among scientific men, a famous professor has departed in the person of JOHN TYNDALL, F.R.S., whose lectures at the Royal Institution made science almost fashionable, who died on the 4th December, 1893. And medicine is the poorer by the loss of the great physician, SIR ANDREW CLARK, who died, aged fifty-eight, on the 6th November. And biology has lost one of its most brilliant students by the death of PROFESSOR GEO. ROMAYNES, who died on the 23rd May, 1894.

In music the losses have been heavy. CHARLES GOUNOD, the eminent French composer, may head the list, who died on the 18th December, 1893, with SIR WILLIAM CUSINS, late "Master of music" to the Queen, on the 31st September. That excellent organist and composer, SIR GEORGE JOB ELVEY, died on the 9th December; and in May the venerable J. H. B. DANDO, aged eighty-eight years, who played the violin at the coronation of William the Fourth and Victoria. And among singers, MADAME PATEY, whose sudden death, almost in the concert room, on the 30th March was generally deplored; while that excellent pianist, HANS VON BULOW, died on the 12th February, 1894, aged sixty-four years; and shortly after, in the same month, the once well-known violinist, M. C. SIVORI, who passed away in his eightieth year.

Among authors the casualties have been numerous, although no name of pre-eminent rank has passed away. But the loss of PROFESSOR HENRY MORLEY, that veteran literary expert, in his seventy-second year, on the 14th May, will be severely felt; and the world of boys, both old and young, must regret the death, on the 8th February, 1894, of R. M. BALLANTYNE, who so lavishly provided those tales of battle and adventure in which they delight. And the girls of two hemispheres may regret the loss of MISS TUCKER, otherwise A. L. O. E., who died in

December, 1893; and of ALICE KING, on the 26th April, both favourite story-tellers for the young. Two poets of high local fame, SAMUEL LAYCOCK, in the homely vernacular of Lancashire, on the 14th December, 1893, and EDWARD OAPERN, known as the Devon postman poet, on the 4th June, 1894, have also passed away.

In the more solid or academic branches of literature we have lost SIR WILLIAM SMITH, on the 7th October, 1893, the learned editor of the "Quarterly," and editor and author of many valuable works of reference; and Mr. WALTER PATER, the historian of the "Renaissance," died on the 30th July, 1894, in his fifty-fifth year. PROFESSOR JOWETT, the great Master of Balliol, and the popular translator of Plato, died on the 1st October in his eighty-seventh year. And on the last day of 1893, PROFESSOR MARSHALL, of Owen's College, was killed in climbing Scafell.

Of journalists are numbered with the dead, EDMUND YATES, of "The World," who died suddenly in harness on the 20th May; and a few days earlier M. JOHNSON, of the London staff of the Paris "Figaro," and a well-known figure among "first nighters"; and also Mr. THOMAS LANE COWARD, the accomplished and genial manager of "The Morning Post," who died on the 27th June, 1894.

MR. HENRY VIZETELLY, who died on New Year's Day, 1894, was a publisher chiefly of what may be styled the "école libre," but he has also written some tolerably amusing "reminiscences."

Of dramatic writers, HENRY PETTIT is gone, and at the early age of forty-four years. He died on Christmas Eve, 1893. And a veteran who had played many parts, and written many too, was EDWARD STIRLING, husband of a most gifted artist, who wrote some annals of Old Drury, and died on the 12th August, 1894, in his eighty-third year.

And from the stage of life has retired ADA SWANBOROUGH, a graceful and talented performer, who died on the 12th December, 1893. And Miss E. "BRUNTON," of the talented Robertson family, better known, perhaps, on the provincial than the London stage, died in the previous month. Another loss has been sustained by the profession in the death of DAVID JAMES, the famous impersonator of Perkyn Middlewick, in "Our Boys," who died on the 3rd October, 1893.

From among artists has departed FORD MADDOX BROWN, a master of his own school, whose historic frescoes in Manchester Town Hall are monumental works of the kind, who died on the 6th October, 1893, in his sixty-second year. And among explorers we have lost the venerable leader, SIR HENRY LAYARD, of Nineveh, less notable in more recent years as a diplomatist, who died on the 5th July, in his seventy-eighth year. And SIR SAMUEL BAKER is dead, the brilliant traveller and discoverer, whose books first opened the Dark Continent to general readers. He died on the 30th December, aged seventy-two. And CAPTAIN LOVETT CAMERON, also a great African traveller, was killed on the 26th March by a fall from his horse.

## CALENDAR FOR 1895.

## JANUARY.

1	T	Circumcision. Maria Edgeworth born, 1767.
2	W	Professor James Stuart born, 1843.
3	Th	Douglas Jerrold born, 1803.
4	F	Sir Isaac Pitman born, 1811.
5	S	Captain Stephen Decatur born, 1779.
6	S	2nd Sunday after Christmas. Epiphany.
7	M	Robert Nicholl born, 1814.
8	T	Alma Tadema born, 1836.
9	W	Napoleon III. died, 1873.
10	Th	Royal Exchange burnt, 1888.
11	F	Sir John MacDonald died, 1891.
12	S	Lord Houghton born, 1838.
13	S	1st Sunday after Epiphany.
14	M	Duke of Clarence died, 1892.
15	T	E. M. Ward, R.A., died, 1879.
16	W	Battle of Corunna, 1809.
17	Th	Battle of Abou Klea, 1855.
18	F	German Empire proclaimed, 1871.
19	S	Paris Bordonie died, 1870.
20	S	2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
21	M	Louis XVI. executed, 1793.
22	T	Capture of Mooltan, 1849.
23	W	William Pitt died, 1806.
24	Th	Charles James Fox born, 1749.
25	F	Conversion of St. Paul.
26	S	Death of Gordon, 1855.
27	S	3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
28	M	Battle of Aliwal, 1846.
29	T	Emanuel Swedenborg born, 1688.
30	W	Westland Marston born, 1819.
31	Th	Ben Jonson born, 1574.

## MOON'S PHASES.

4th.	First Quarter ..	7A. 52m.	Morning.
11th.	Full Moon ..	6 50	Morning.
17th.	Last Quarter ..	10 55	Afternoon.
25th.	New Moon ..	9 26	Afternoon.

## FEBRUARY.

1	F	John Lemprière born, 1824.
2	S	Purification. Candlemas.
3	S	4th Sunday after Epiphany.
4	M	George Lillo, dramatist, born, 1693.
5	T	Sir Robert Peel born, 1788; died, 2nd July, 1850.
6	W	Queen Anne born, 1635.
7	Th	Charles Dickens born, 1812; died, 9th June, 1870.
8	F	Queen Mary Tudor born, 1515.
9	S	Lord Darnley murdered, 1567.
10	S	Septuagesima.
11	M	Thomas A. Edison born, 1847.
12	T	President Abraham Lincoln born, 1809.
13	W	Richard Wagner died, 1883.
14	Th	St. Valentine.
15	F	Sir Edward Clarke born, 1811.
16	S	Philip Melancthon born, 1497.
17	S	Sexagesima.
18	M	Charles Lamb born, 1775.
19	T	N. Copernicus born, 1473.
20	W	David Garrick born, 1716.
21	Th	Battle of Gazerat, 1849.
22	F	George Washington born, 1732.
23	S	Arrest of Cato Street Conspirators, 1820.
24	S	Quinquagesima. St. Matthias.
25	M	Sir Christopher Wren died, 1723.
26	T	John Philip Kemble born, 1823.
27	W	Ash Wednesday.
28	Th	R. H. Froude died, 1836.

## MOON'S PHASES.

3rd.	First Quarter ..	0A. 16m.	Morning.
9th.	Full Moon ..	5 23	Afternoon.
16th.	Last Quarter ..	1 9	Afternoon.
24th.	New Moon ..	4 44	Afternoon.

## MARCH.

1	F	St. David's Day.
2	S	Horace Walpole died, 1797.
3	S	1st Sunday in Lent.
4	M	John Timbs died, 1875.
5	T	Covent Garden Theatre burnt, 1866.
6	W	Sir John Hawkwood died, 1393.
7	Th	SS. Perpetua and Felicitas.
8	F	Battle of Aboukir, 1801.
9	S	William Cobbett born, 1762.
10	S	2nd Sunday in Lent.
11	M	Torquato Tasso born, 1544.
12	T	B. W. Leader, A.R.A., born, 1831.
13	W	Aug. J. C. Hare born, 1834.
14	Th	Admiral Byng shot, 1757.
15	F	J. J. E. Reclus born, 1830.
16	S	Gustavus III. of Sweden assassinated, 1792.
17	S	3rd Sunday in Lent. St. Patrick's Day.
18	M	Sir Robert Walpole died, 1745.
19	T	Bishop Ken died, 1711.
20	W	Thomas Webster, R.A., born, 1800.
21	Th	Robert Bruce born, 1274.
22	F	Rosalie Bonheur born, 1822.
23	S	Battle of Novara, 1849.
24	S	4th Sunday in Lent.
25	M	Annunciation. Lady Day.
26	T	Sir John Vanbrugh died, 1726.
27	W	John Bright died, 1889.
28	Th	Dr. Andrew Kippis born, 1725.
29	F	John Keble died, 1866.
30	S	Tiberius Cavallo, F.R.S., born, 1749.
31	S	5th Sunday in Lent.

## MOON'S PHASES.

4th.	First Quarter ..	0A. 40m.	Afternoon.
11th.	Full Moon ..	3 38	Morning.
18th.	Last Quarter ..	5 32	M. raining.
26th.	New Moon ..	10 25	Morning.

## APRIL.

1	M	Prince Bismarck born, 1815.
2	T	Emile Zola born, 1840.
3	W	George Herbert, poet, born, 1833.
4	Th	St. Ambrose.
5	F	Thomas Hobbes born, 1588.
6	S	James Mill born, 1773.
7	S	Palm Sunday.
8	M	Von Humboldt died, 1835.
9	T	Adelina Patti born, 1843.
10	W	Pixarro beheaded, 1548.
11	Th	Charles Reade, novelist, died, 1884.
12	F	Good Friday.
13	S	A. Comte died, 1837.
14	S	Easter Sunday.
15	M	Bank Holiday.
16	T	Adolphe Thiers born, 1797.
17	W	George Frederick Cooke, actor, born, 1756.
18	Th	Geo. H. Lewis born, 1819.
19	F	Primeiro Day. Lord Beaconsfield died, 1881.
20	S	Napoleon III. born, 1808.
21	S	Low Sunday.
22	T	Henry Fielcing born, 1707.
23	T	J. M. W. Turner, R.A., born, 1775. St. George.
24	W	Anthony Trollope born, 1815.
25	Th	St. Mark.
26	F	David Hume born, 1711.
27	S	Edward Whympor born, 1840.
28	S	2nd Sunday after Easter.
29	M	General Boulanger born, 1837.
30	Tu	Richard Redgrave, R.A., born, 1804.

## MOON'S PHASES.

2nd.	First Quarter ..	9A. 28m.	Afternoon.
9th.	Full Moon ..	1 43	Afternoon.
16th.	Last Quarter ..	11 22	Afternoon.
25th.	New Moon ..	1 11	Morning.

## MAY.

1	W	SS. Philip and James.
2	Th	William Camden born, 1550.
3	F	Archbishop Sharp killed, 1679.
4	S	T. H. Huxley born, 1825.
5	S	3rd Sunday after Easter.
6	M	Constable Bourbon killed, 1527
7	W	Lord Rosebery born, 1847.
8	W	A. R. Le Sage born, 1668.
9	Th	Fouché, Duke of Otranto, born, 1763.
10	F	Italian Mutiny began, 1857.
11	S	Charles Macklin, dramatist, born, 1690.
12	S	4th Sunday after Easter.
13	M	Sir Arthur Sullivan born, 1842.
14	T	Henry Grattan died, 1820.
15	W	Florence Nightingale born, 1820.
16	Th	Felicia Hemans died, 1835.
17	F	Timothy M. Healy born, 1855.
18	S	Alphonse Daudet born, 1840.
19	S	Rogation Sunday.
20	M	John Stuart Mill born, 1806.
21	T	Albrecht Dürer born, 1471.
22	W	Alexander Pope, poet, born, 1688.
23	Th	Ascension Day.
24	F	Queen Victoria born, 1819.
25	S	Princess Christian born, 1846.
26	S	Sunday after Ascension.
27	M	Princess Mathilde Bonaparte born, 1820.
28	T	Thomas Moore born, 1780.
29	W	Empress Josephine died, 1814.
30	Th	Joan of Arc burnt, 1431.
31	F	Walf Whitman born, 1819.

## MOON'S PHASES.

2nd.	First Quarter ..	3A. 44m.	Morning.
8th.	Full Moon ..	11 59	Afternoon.
16th.	Last Quarter ..	5 44	Afternoon.
24th.	New Moon ..	0 46	Afternoon.
31st.	First Quarter ..	8 48	Morning.

## JUNE.

1	S	Lord Howe's naval victory, 1794.
2	S	Whit Sunday.
3	M	Bank Holiday.
4	T	Lord Wolsley born, 1833.
5	W	Adam Smith born, 1723.
6	Th	Pierre Corneille born, 1606.
7	F	J. Rennet born, 1761.
8	S	J. B. Millar, R.A., born, 1829.
9	S	Trinity Sunday.
10	M	Sir Edwin Arnold born, 1832.
11	T	St. Barnabas.
12	W	Rev. Charles Kingsley born, 1819.
13	Th	Corpus Christi. Dr. Arnold born, 1795.
14	F	Battle of Naseby, 1645.
15	S	Edward the Black Prince born, 1380.
16	S	1st Sunday after Trinity.
17	M	John Wesley born, 1703.
18	T	Battle of Waterloo, 1815.
19	W	Rev. C. H. Spurgeon born, 1834.
20	Th	Queen's Accession, 1837.
21	F	John Skelton died, 1522.
22	S	Macchiavelli died, 1527.
23	S	2nd Sunday after Trinity.
24	M	St. John Baptist. Quarter Day.
25	T	John Horne Tooke born, 1736.
26	W	George Morland born, 1763.
27	Th	Charles XII. of Sweden born, 1682.
28	F	Coronation Day.
29	S	St. Peter.
30	S	3rd Sunday after Trinity.

## MOON'S PHASES.

7th.	Full Moon ..	11A. 0m.	Morning.
15th.	Last Quarter ..	11 28	Morning.
22nd.	New Moon ..	9 51	Afternoon.
29th.	First Quarter ..	2 1	Afternoon.

## JULY.

1	M	Sir Robert Ball, astronomer, born, 1840.
2	T	J. J. Rousseau died, 1778.
3	W	Louis XI. born, 1423.
4	Th	Giuseppe Garibaldi born, 1807.
5	F	Sarah Siddons born, 1755.
6	S	Battle of Sedgemoor, 1685.
7	S	4th Sunday after Trinity.
8	M	Battle of Pultawa, 1709.
9	T	Henry Hallam born, 1777.
10	W	John Calvin born, 1509.
11	Th	W. E. Forster born, 1813.
12	F	Josiah Wedgwood born, 1730.
13	S	Marat assassinated, 1793.
14	S	5th Sunday after Trinity.
15	M	Cardinal Manning born, 1808: St. Swithin.
16	T	Sir Thomas More beheaded, 1535.
17	W	Dr. Isaac Watts born, 1747.
18	Th	W. M. Thackeray born, 1811.
19	F	Alfred Waterhouse, architect, born, 1830.
20	S	St. Margaret.
21	S	6th Sunday after Trinity.
22	M	Charles Landseer, R.A., died, 1679.
23	T	William Wilberforce died, 1833.
24	W	Simon Bolivar born, 1783.
25	Th	St. James, Apostle.
26	F	St. Anne.
27	S	Thomas Campbell born, 1777.
28	S	7th Sunday after Trinity.
29	M	Spanish Armada dispersed, 1588.
30	T	Thomas Gray, poet, died, 1771.
31	W	Paul Du Chailin born, 1835.

## MOON'S PHASES.

6th.	Full Moon ..	11A. 29m.	Afternoon.
13th.	Last Quarter ..	3 31	Morning.
22nd.	New Moon ..	5 32	Morning.
29th.	First Quarter ..	8 36	Afternoon.

## AUGUST.

1	Th	Mrs. Inchbald died, 1821.
2	F	Captain Marryat died, 1843.
3	S	Christina Nilsson born, 1843.
4	S	8th Sunday after Trinity.
5	M	Bank Holiday.
6	T	Lord Tennyson born, 1809.
7	W	Queen Caroline died, 1821.
8	Th	Sir Arthur Oway born, 1822.
9	F	Von Schlegel died, 1829.
10	S	C. W. Dilke died, 1864.
11	S	9th Sunday after Trinity.
12	M	Grouse Shooting begins.
13	T	Jeremy Taylor died, 1667.
14	W	George Colman, elder, died, 1794.
15	Th	Admiral Robert Blake born, 1599.
16	F	Ben Jonson died, 1637.
17	S	Matthew Boulton, machinist, died, 1809.
18	S	10th Sunday after Trinity.
19	M	Henry Kirke White born, 1785.
20	T	Kenny Meadows died, 1674.
21	W	Professor Tyndall born, 1820.
22	Th	Richard III. killed, 1485.
23	F	Sir Astley Cooper, surgeon, born, 1768.
24	S	St. Bartholomew.
25	S	11th Sunday after Trinity.
26	M	Prince Albert born, 1819.
27	T	Titian died, 1576.
28	W	Von Goethe born, 1749.
29	Th	Battle of Aspromonte, 1862.
30	F	M. J. Chenier, poet, born, 1764.
31	S	Thomas Miller, novelist, born, 1808.

## MOON'S PHASES.

5th.	Full Moon ..	1A. 51m.	Afternoon.
13th.	Last Quarter ..	5 19	Afternoon.
20th.	New Moon ..	0 58	Afternoon.
27th.	First Quarter ..	5 43	Morning.

## SEPTEMBER.

1	S	12th Sunday after Trinity.
2	M	Capitulation of Sedan, 1870. Partridge Shooting begins.
3	T	Eugène de Beaumarnais born, 1781.
4	W	Sir Wilfred Lawson born, 1829.
5	Th	John Dalton, chemist, born, 1756.
6	F	Marquis de Lafayette born, 1757.
7	S	Hannah More died, 1833.
8	S	13th Sunday after Trinity.
9	M	Battle of Flodden Field, 1513.
10	T	Mungo Park born, 1771.
11	W	Lady Palmerston died, 1869.
12	Th	F. P. G. Guizot died, 1874.
13	F	Andrea Mantegna died, 1506.
14	S	Holy Cross Day.
15	S	14th Sunday after Trinity.
16	M	F. S. Haden born, 1818.
17	T	Marquis de Condorcet born, 1748.
18	W	William Collins, R.A., born, 1783.
19	Th	Henry Lord Brougham born, 1779.
20	F	Battle of the Alma, 1854.
21	S	St. Matthew.
22	S	15th Sunday after Trinity.
23	M	Jane Taylor, author, born, 1783.
24	T	Paracelsus died, 1541.
25	W	Felicia Hemans born, 1794.
26	Th	Admiral Collingwood born, 1748.
27	F	Paul Féval born, 1817.
28	S	F. T. Palgrave born, 1824.
29	S	16th Sunday after Trinity. St. Michael and Bishop Percy died, 1811.
30	M	[All Angels.]

## Moon's PHASES.

4th.	Full Moon	.. 5h. 55m. Morning.
12th.	Last Quarter	.. 4 51 Morning.
18th.	New Moon	.. 8 55 Afternoon.
25th.	First Quarter	.. 6 23 Afternoon.

## OCTOBER.

1	T	Mrs. Annie Besant born, 1847.
2	W	Cardinal Borromeo born, 1548.
3	Th	Treaty of Limerick, 1691.
4	F	Felix Pyat born, 1810.
5	S	Horace Walpole born, 1715.
6	S	17th Sunday after Trinity.
7	M	Battle of Lepanto, 1571.
8	T	Count Alfieri, poet, died, 1803.
9	W	Cervantes born, 1547.
10	Th	Sir William Minto born, 1845.
11	F	Old Michaelmas Day.
12	S	John Zisca died, 1424.
13	S	18th Sunday after Trinity.
14	M	Sir William Harcourt born, 1827.
15	T	Alexander Tytler born, 1747.
16	W	Kociuszko died, 1817.
17	Th	Isa Craig born, 1831.
18	F	St. Luke.
19	S	Charles R. Leslie, R.A., born, 1797.
20	S	19th Sunday after Trinity.
21	M	S. T. Coleridge born, 1772.
22	T	Sara Bernhardt born, 1844.
23	W	Ann Oldfield, actress, died, 1780.
24	Th	Prince Poniatowski killed, 1812.
25	F	Battle of Agincourt, 1415.
26	S	G. J. Lantton born, 1759.
27	S	20th Sunday after Trinity.
28	M	SS. Simon and Jude.
29	T	James Boswell born, 1740.
30	W	Sir H. James born, 1828.
31	Th	John Keats born, 1795.

## Moon's PHASES.

3rd.	Full Moon	.. 10h. 47m. Afternoon.
11th.	Last Quarter	.. 2 34 Afternoon.
18th.	New Moon	.. 6 10 Morning.
25th.	First Quarter	.. 11 4 Morning.

## NOVEMBER.

1	F	All Saint's Day.
2	S	All Souls'.
3	S	21st Sunday after Trinity.
4	M	Edmund Kean born, 1767.
5	T	Gunpowder Plot.
6	W	Princess Charlotte died, 1817.
7	Th	Sir Martin Frobiisher killed, 1594.
8	F	Ma tame Roland guillotined, 1793.
9	S	Prince of Wales born, 1841.
10	S	22nd Sunday after Trinity.
11	M	St. Martin. Martinmas.
12	T	Richard Baxter born, 1615.
13	W	George Fox died, 1690.
14	Th	Loss of the Prince of Balaclava, 1854.
15	F	Sir William Herschell born, 1783.
16	S	Francis Danby, artist, born, 1793.
17	S	23rd Sunday after Trinity.
18	M	Earl Lytton (Owen Meredith) born, 1831.
19	T	Charles I. born, 1600.
20	W	St. Edmund, King and Martyr.
21	Th	Empress Frederick of Germany born, 1840.
22	F	St. Cecilia. "George Elliot" born, 1819.
23	S	Father Ignatius born, 1597.
24	S	24th Sunday after Trinity.
25	M	Dr. Isaac Watts died, 1748.
26	T	Empress Dagmar of Russia born, 1847.
27	W	Frank Dicksee, R.A., born, 1853.
28	Th	William Blake born, 1757.
29	F	Sir Philip Sidney born, 1554.
30	S	St. Andrew. Dean Swift born, 1667.

## Moon's PHASES.

2nd.	Full Moon	.. 3h. 18m. Afternoon.
9th.	Last Quarter	.. 11 7 Afternoon.
16th.	New Moon	.. 5 11 Afternoon.
24th.	First Quarter	.. 7 19 Morning.

## DECEMBER.

1	S	Advent Sunday.
2	M	Coup d'Etat, Paris, 1851.
3	T	Chief Justice Lord Coleridge born, 1820.
4	W	Thomas Carlyle born, 1795.
5	Th	Mozart died, 1792.
6	F	Thomas Shadwell, dramatist, died, 1692.
7	S	Marshal Ney shot, 1815.
8	S	2nd Sunday in Advent.
9	M	John Milton born, 1608.
10	T	Sir Henry Ponsonby born, 1825.
11	W	Sir David Brewster born, 1781.
12	Th	Erasmus Darwin born, 1721.
13	F	Dr. Samuel Johnson died, 1784.
14	S	George Washington died, 1799.
15	S	3rd Sunday in Advent.
16	M	Jane Austen born, 1775.
17	T	Thomas Woolner, R.A., born, 1826.
18	W	Alexandra Chatrain born, 1826.
19	Th	Toulon recaptured, 1793.
20	F	Alfred Bunn, dramatist, died, 1860.
21	S	St. Thomas.
22	S	4th Sunday in Advent.
23	M	Sir Martin Shee, P.R.A., born, 1770.
24	T	John Morley, M.P., born, 1838.
25	W	Christmas Day.
26	Th	St. Stephen. Bank Holiday.
27	F	St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.
28	S	Innocent's Day.
29	S	1st Sunday after Christmas. W. E. Gladstone
30	M	John Phillips, poet, born, 1678. (born, 1809.
31	T	John Wicliffe died, 1384.

## Moon's PHASES.

2nd.	Full Moon	.. 6h. 38m. Morning.
9th.	Last Quarter	.. 7 9 Morning.
16th.	New Moon	.. 6 30 Morning.
24th.	First Quarter	.. 5 21 Morning.
31st.	Full Moon	.. 8 31 Afternoon.

Golden Number..	.. xv	Solar Cycle ..	.. 28	Roman Indiction ..	.. 8
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